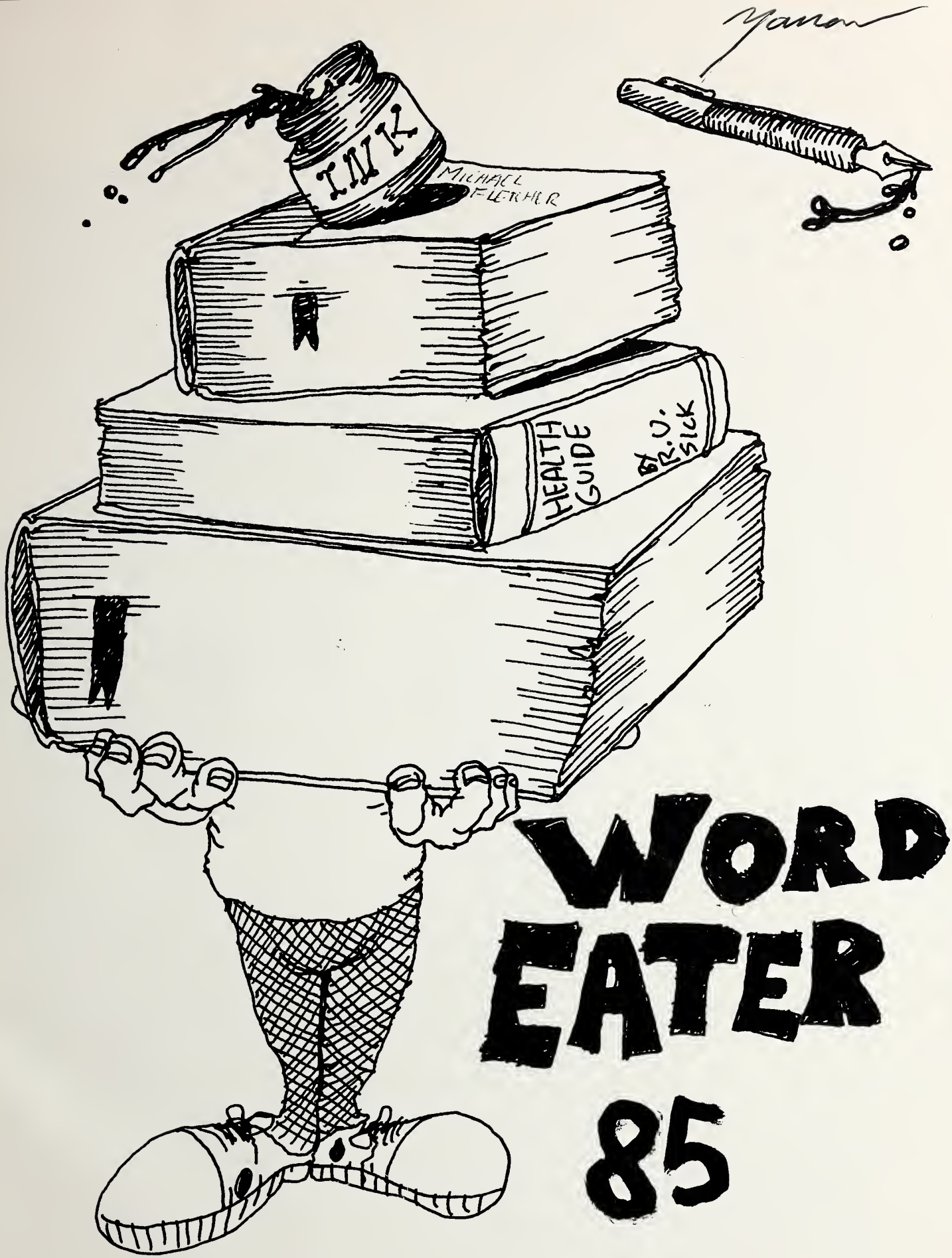

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1.

Ode to a Supra

Arleen Kraszczyk

Thou yet unbroken steed of steel,
Thou swift and silent arrow,
Wings of eagles guide thy wheels,
Thy power stirs my marrow.

Blue demon cast of angel's wings,
My chariot and cocoon,
ride thee through the snow and rain
By light of sun and moon.

From whence came thee?
Across the sea?
From ancient land and city?
Some damn you for your fatherland
And curse you; more's the pity.

Thou vessel of blue checked velour,
Rubber, chrome and leather,
Thy very name[1] bespeaks the art
That holds you all together.

Within thy doors are secrets kept
And words that go unspoken.
A diadem of crimson lights
Tells me if something's broken.

Thine eyes illuminate the road,
Thy valves move smooth as silk,
Thy steering wheel adjusts to size
With telescope and tilt.

Oh! royal carriage made by men
Who labor for Toyota,
Time won't affect my love for thee
Not even one iota.

supra adv.: above, beyond, understanding

2.

i keep thinking...

Sarah Elizabeth Kremsner

i keep thinking to find a thought
to dream to be and
you say, in your eyes i see you to make decisions and
then turn away from your contentment
just
let them be

i keep thinking to wipe those
things away you know
those things that pop into
my eye and tease my
senses
because its not whiskey
anymore
its not friendly tokes
and morning munchies at the cafeteria
and sunset treks to
the railroad tracks
and its not summer roadtrips
its not montana in august or
sleeping in the warmth of new mexico sand
georgia is still merely a state i have
never seen

so fall comes creeping upon me
and i am no better off at all
instead
just thinking trying to find my answers dreams of
flying south for the winter
and of escape
and of happiness
scared to death that i will rot with
the autumn leaves

sister, cant you hear me screaming?

3.

Birdwatch

Janine Passehl

gazing skyward from
the open window
swifts
frantically swooping
looping
darting
up
darting
down
perching upon the chimney
all around
five, twelve, thirty,
at least
until one
by
one
a final
descent
to my overgrown lawn

4.

Midnight's Light

Mike Dabrowski

Midnight's Light
surrounds me.
The mists of yesterdays
gone by
hang lazily overhead.
But who knows
where tomorrow goes
until another misty night
comes 'round.
The thoughts and dreams
we see float by
And faintly glimmer,
the one brief light,
that once,
was yesterday's
chance.

5.

Untitled

Maggie Clay

dO YOU THINK TIME WOULD STOP FOR ME
dO YOU THINK THE WINDS WOULD BLOW MY WAY
dO YOU THINK THE SUN SET WOULD TALK
iF SO WHAT WOULD IT SAY

dO YOU THINK THE THUNDER WOULD CALL FOR ME
dO YOU THINK THE RAINS WOULD CRY
dO YOU THINK THE LIGHTNING WOULD REACH OUT
tO GENTLY WIPE MY EYES

dO YOU THINK THE WATERS WOULD STAND STILL FOR ME
dO YOU THINK I COULD LIE AND CHAT WITH THEM OR
dO YOU THINK MY MIND WOULD FLOAT AWAY
wITH CHERISHED THOUGHTS OF HIM

O YOU THINK THE WORLD WOULD SLOW DOWN FOR ME
dO YOU THINK IT WOULD CEASE TO TURN AT ALL
i ONLY WISH IT WOULD PAUSE FOR A BIT
fOR I AM SO DIZZY I MAY FALL.

6.

Journey to Inspiration

Dan Anderson

The untouched canvas grows impatient
while the sea of plastic still engulfs the brush
that is longing to dwell upon the smooth texture

It dreams of painting up a panacea so great
that it sends ripples through the water that has
now grown cold in the deserted studio of lifeless animation

The paint has settled and its appetite to be used
has grown to be so small that it no longer
ponders, What to create? It longs only to know, When?

As the chilling wind blows through, it seems to stir
the lost heartbeat of the imagination once known,
The excitement is ignited by a thought...
The creation begins.

7.

Conformity Calling

S. Erickson

I try not to think
in lines or in circles
or in neat little boxes.
I try to make it hard for those who label
to label
But I don't know if that really happens.

I try not to talk
Down to people
or behind people's backs
But rather to them, with them
Alongside them
But I don't know if that really happens either.

But not to act
Like everyone else
And sometimes I wonder if that's good. Sometimes I wonder
Is it possible to conform through nonconformity?
If everyone were completely different
Couldn't one achieve individuality through imitation?
And consequently bottle oneself or sink to a lower level?
Perhaps outcasts should have the hearts
For people them a structure to oppose
Because the masses should thank the few
For supplying a god to rebel against
But I don't think that will ever happen.

8.

Old Willow

Ellen Fabrizio

Gray barren branch of the ancient willow,
Creaks and groans in the balmy breeze;
Aching cries, murmurs of protest,
Lingering appendage to a dying tree.

Gnarled roots, decayed and rotten,
Clutch the ground in a desperate measure;
Support the swaying of melancholy motions;
Reminisce, entwined in clusters, about distant days.

9.

Shadow of the Sparrow

Matthew Page

Love is an arrow--
We are blind,
It hides behind
The shadow of a sparrow.

Our way she will dart--
Raise our hand
To let her land,
But she dives to pierce our heart.

Transformed to dagger--
Stunned by sight
Of such a knife--
From broken heart we stagger.

If the arrow wills--
No one strays
If seen as prey
From the bird that always kills.

10.

Love and the Swallow

David Weese

As a swallow
Love wheels and dives above you
Seeming touchable in its antics
But elusive
As lightning
It bursts asunder
Leaving only
Ashes
Dust
Falling through singed fingers
Spiraling down
like snowflakes
Obscuring in a whitewash blanket
The earthy sorrow
The clingy moss of pain

We reach for an illusion
Spinning free on glorified wings
A teasing dance on thin air
So far from mother earth
from her love of the will
from her swallow
Diving
Cavorting
But always heeding
The gentle beckon
Of mother earth
Of her reality
Of her fruits
Reach
Touch
Fly

11.

A Lonely Grave

Art Walters

There are no poppies there to blow--
In Sicily the cacti grow
Along the roadside, row on row,
And trail into the hill.
The rocks and bushes hide the way,
So minutes later none could say:
"It was upon this rill."

There by his side I saw him fall,
My fondest friend, the pal of all--
So young to answer to the Call! '
Twas thus we laid him there...
We dug the grave and let him down;
No music played to ease or drown
Our sorrow--just our prayer:

"O, God in Heaven, grant him rest,
Please keep this spot forever blest,
Please guard him close we would request
For one we honored so.".....
In Sicily (the Lord knows where)
Our fallen comrade's sleeping there
Where thorny cacti grow.

12.

Jurassic Park No Show

Bob Bartlett

Last summer, when I heard about the movie *Jurassic Park*, I couldn't wait to see it because I had heard that one of my favorite celebrities was in it. After seeing the movie, I was disappointed. I did see Jeff Goldblum, Laura Dern, Sir Richard Attenborough and a whole bunch of big old ugly animals. However, no where in the entire movie did I even see a glimpse of my all-time favorite actress - Dinah Shore.

13.

Remember Me

Sonya Weeks

Autumn is here, and my thoughts are with you
My Brother Angel, who spread his wings and flew
He flew to a place made of silver and gold
A land of rest where he'll never grow old
His loved ones all wonder, is he happy and content where he's at?
But the only one who can tell us, is Pat

As God opened his arms, he said "Patrick, it's time to go"
"But Wait!" Pat said, "My family, there's something they need to know
I want them to remember me in their very own special way
Everywhere they look, in everything they see
I want them to feel peaceful for around them is a part of me

In the Winter, I'll be the beautiful white snow that falls upon the ground
For my children to play with and be delighted to see me all around

In the Spring, I'll sing to them from the tallest and strongest tree, and if they listen closely, they'll know that songbird is me

In the Summer, I'll be the warm sun shining upon their backs
They'll feel so warm and content and say `I know you're there, Pat'

Last of all, in the Fall, I'll be the gentle breeze whispering in their ears
I'll be their Guardian Angel and protect them through the years
But when fall comes to season,
Oh please don't be sad Just think of me and remember all the good times we had
Therefore my family, please be grateful, for below I did not fall
God hugged me with his heart and took me to heaven blue jeans, bandana, and all!"
PATRICK EUGENE THOMASSON/
2-13-58 TO 9-7-93

14.

In the Closet, Under the Bed, and In My Head

Chris Savini

With a flick of the switch
The room is filled with mind-expanding black,
A world of nothing where everything is beautiful,
Where everything is the same.
In the darkness I have no color, no gender.
I am a voice and a force.
I am infinite.
I fill the room and stretch as far as the eye can't see.
In the dark
I am a lover
Crawling across the bed,
Or a scared child hiding under the covers.
And there are bogeymen in the closet
And monsters under the bed,
And we are brothers
Because we exist in the dark.

15.

The Drunken

T.L. Chapin

Once upon an evening merry,
While I stumbled, drunk and dreary,
Over many odd and klunky objects lying upon my floor.
While I stuttered, nearly falling,
I found my appearance quite appalling.
And each eye tried to find its way toward a separate door.
"It's something I drank," I think I muttered.
"It's only that 'n' nuttin' more."

16.

Monday September 13, 1993

Sarah Elizabeth Kremsner

I.
its this sweet garlic smell
which is actually only soil
the earth wiped clean by
rain, falling since late morning
and my body feels light here
next to the window next to calm calm
drizzle next to the sound of water plinking
off the tin gutters closest I
ever feel to god
II.
my own private sitting room bright
in the day and warm at night serving
really as the living room
for all the members of the family though
i sit in it most, always alone legs
crossed into the folds of the green chair
where i read and think and
stare into the maxfield parrish print above
the piano wishing myself away into his
blue creased mountains
III.
today it is willa cather, having
finished man rays biography late
last week and i have found her
quite fitting to this damp autumn day
with her vast open places and her
voyages and her women of fearless
roaming who would take no place in
my own daily adventures, drab fillers
even on the days when the
sun shines
IV.
ive had dreams some of which
still visit me now and then and when
i see certain people in my head certain
places i have watched with eyes
now tired and hiding, escaping into the
pages of a library book or a painting it sometimes
makes me slip to my knees and hold my
head in sickness sometimes
brings new dreams of new things my body shaking
my eyes now wide with exciting
and anxious thoughts my little brain
trying to register all that
is whirling inside
V.
today i chose to sit here by
the window listening to the rain
focusing only on this character the
fiction of my own denial the escape to a
place where maxfield parrish strokes my hair and
my mind runs wild in a field
somewhere between here
and god

17.

Dad

Bob Czernik

Sunlight seen
off the dusty glass
of
his picture.
How long has it been
since I've
blown on the glass,
shined it up,
and gazed
at a smirk
that I make
too.
How long
since I've
swung at a ball,
wishing you had pitched it.
How long
since I've wished
you could be here.

18.

The Flying Red Horse

John Stobart

My father's names were Francis and Irwin, family names. His father saw to it that Francis got a high school education so that he wouldn't have to go to Wassom, the subterranean coal field that gave our town its name, our ountryside its slagheaps and elevator shafts, and my grandfather his spotty lungs.

Everyone called my father Fritz. He was a bankteller until the depression closed the 1st National. Then he borrowed enough money from his father-in-law to lease a filling station across the street from the bank. His father was indignant but three years later mellowed---when Fritz was able to buy him the mortgage on a little farm.

I heard all this over and over from my mother---in a dozen different variations and with hundreds of details. She talked about nothing else with such enthusiasm. We were living at her mother's house then. I was the oldest son. Everyone but my grandfather said I looked like my father. My grandfather wouldn't talk about it.

My father had been killed in an auto accident when I was four. That was kind of funny considering he worked with autos. I remembered him mostly in a greasy, navy-blue jacket with a flying red horse stitched across the back. He had taught me that big boys don't cry, so I wouldn't. I kept going up to people and saying, "Everyone else cried the night my daddy died, but I didn't." They sent my little brother and me to stay with some aunt whose name I didn't know and who kept giving me fruitcake until I got sick.

Anyway, that was when everyone started calling me Fritz. The name stuck with me until my mother married again when I was ten and we moved to Chicago. My step-father explained to me then---very gently---that Fritz had become a bad name because of the war with Germany. I agreed about my nickname but wouldn't give up on my family name when he wanted to adopt me two years later. It just didn't seem right.

After the funeral we moved into my

grandmother's house. She was very rich, I thought. She kept a companion, Lena, who was "part of the family." Every afternoon Lena walked me up to the Washington County Court House. We walked right between the Flying Red Horse Filling Station and the 1st National Bank Building, eleven stories of dark-red brick topped by a big radio tower visible for over ten miles when lighted at night. Lena's father, Uncle Charlie, was always sitting somewhere on the concrete wall surrounding the Court House. Everyone called him Uncle Charlie, even Lena. He was toothless, and ninety-three years old, a former drummer boy for the North in the Civil War. I didn't understand that. We lived in *Southern* Illinois. He always called the area Little Egypt, though. I guess because he was always telling me about the "flood of '37 when yer daddy saved you from the Mississip. Made Ripley's *Believe It Or Not*, right on the back page of the funny papers. Said, `river backs up twenty-three miles to flood town under fifteen foot of water.' That's when they built the levee, you know," he would always add, referring to the thirty-five foot cement wall surrounding the township and holding the waters back every spring. Uncle Charlie died right before Thanksgiving. Lena and I started playing Old Maid with my little brother in the afternoons.

My mother and brother were both short and fat with dark brown eyes and chestnut hair. I am a towhead and muscular and have light-green eyes, hazel---mother always said. Her mother was also short and fat, but her eyes and hair were blue. My mother said she had been a blond before the graying started. The blue came from her rinses. Her husband died the year of the big flood, but his photograph was on the mantel. He too was short and brown-eyed with chestnut hair, but his face was baggy like a bulldog's and very sad. My father's photo was on mother's dresser. He was dressed a lot like Uncle Charlie in the very brown old photo on Lena's bed, both in dark uniforms with lots of brass buttons down the jackets. But father had a sash and a sword and a funny hat, like the ones you make out of paper at parties---but with a big plume sticking out. Mother said it was a Mason's uniform. Father had brown eyes and hair and looked very serious.

My mother had three brothers who were always visiting grandmother, all short, fat, and brown. One of them was even named Frank, like my brother. Uncle Frank, he was, Frank Pryor, Jr. His son, my cousin Buddy, was Frank Pryor the 3rd. My brother Frank was just plain Frank. I didn't understand.

John and Francis are my real names, the same as my grandfather. But I'm not a junior! My mother had insisted because she detested Frank Jr. Anyway, my grandfather was short and fat but had blue eyes and huge ears. His wife was short and skinny and had blue eyes, but I found out she shouldn't be a concern because my real grandmother had died before I was born. Mother said I had her eyes! Also I was supposed to call grandpa's wife Aunt Winnie because she wanted it that way since she had real grandchildren of her own she didn't wish to confuse.

Two other relatives lived across the street from my grandmother. The one in the wheelchair was my real great grandmother. She was to be called Granny, and I was taken to see her every Sunday. She'd be sitting behind a desk at the end of a long, gloomy room with brown waterstains on the wallpaper. Her faded afghan gathered round her shoulders, she'd shake from the effort to see or hear as she sucked the snuff rolled in her lower lip. We were supposed to take turns going up to the desk and shouting our names so that she could hear us. If she understood she gave you a nickel. Once I said my "John Francis" and she didn't hear. Mother said for me to try Fritz. I did and added mother's name, "I'm Fritz, Granny, Carrie Dora's boy!" She took two nickels from her little coin purse and shoved them at me, saying, "Such a sweet, little girl!" She squinted too much for me to see her eyes in the dark room, so I just took one nickel, but she didn't notice. Frank took the extra one.

Next door to Granny lived Great Aunt Dick, who wasn't really my aunt. She had married my Great Uncle, Thomas Richard Sherman Reynolds---known as Dick. His wife stayed around after he died, so the family called her Aunt Dick. One of my real Uncles had the names Thomas, Richard, Sherman, and Reynolds too. He was my real Uncle Dick and a much-loved doctor who caught hepatitis from a patient and died. My mother's third brother was my real Uncle Charley, not to be confused with Lena's father or my Great Uncle Charley, the dentist---or his son,

also a dentist and called Cousin Charles---or his son, a boy my age, who was Cousin Charley.

All these pudgy-brown faces came to my grandmother's house on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Her house was like a church; everything was special and had to be just so. A pastel blue carpet with a floral design ran from the front door, through the hall, and into an enormous, long room with two bow windows on the right, both so big I could stand in the middle and couldn't touch any of the gauzy curtains. At Thanksgiving the banquet table seen from the opposite end of the room reminded me of the picture of The Last Supper. Grandmother had so much fine china (Haviland, Mother always called it) that the older children got to eat from it. Even the little kids got their water in big salmon-colored goblets.

Frank and I weren't allowed in her part of the house, but once I sneaked in a friend and showed off the splendor. I plugged in the electric logs stacked in the white brick fireplace and indicated the gold-plated tea service with a nonchalant waggle of my fingers.

Our part of the house was at the back, like the top line on a T. Mother's bedroom had a door leading into Grandmother's, but the door was kept locked. Mother had a separate entrance made with the insurance money from father's accident. The entire section had been empty for years. There were big squares where rugs had been, so Mother had an orangish linoleum laid over all the floors, even on the kitchen floor in the basement. She said that she didn't have time or energy to worry about floors now that she was working.

The man who put the linoleum down was a sailor on leave. He was Bang's friend. She was the woman who worked behind the fountain with Mother at Grandmother's drugstore. They both wore green dresses with white collars. Bang was a great kidder who sort of scared me because she talked so deep in her throat and was always squinting her eyes to keep out the smoke from her cigarette. She taught my other how to smoke too, but mother didn't squint so much and never smoked around the house. She had me promise not to tell grandmother. Bang let me call her by her nickname but didn't want me to call her Aunt Bang. "Don't you dare, kiddo." That's what she said, and mother thought it was funny, so I laughed too.

The drugstore was exactly in the center of town. Grandmother was proud of that, "Directly in front of the Court House," she used to say, "that's why they built it there." Her blue eye would twinkle and she'd wait expectantly. If a person didn't bite, she'd get upset, "Well, don't you want to know *which it* I mean?" Everyone called it The Store. I heard grandmother say it killed her husband before his time. I began worrying about what I'd be when I grew up. I knew I'd be great-whatever it was-but the whole prospect was scary. I asked my mother if I could be a drummer boy in the army, but she said they'd gone out of style.

My brother is eleven months younger than me, so grandmother always dressed us alike for the evening trip to The Store. Secretly I kind of liked this idea, but to keep up appearances, I said scornfully that Frank and I looked like Mutt and Jeff. She argued cleverly that we looked as much alike as Tom and Jerry, Uncle Dick's two boys, and that they dressed alike to go downtown. She knew we admired these cousins because they were older. Besides, it was a family joke that *we* were straight out of the comic strips and *they* were both "stars of the silver screen." Every evening Grandmother would take each of us in hand and walk us to The Store, two sets of brown corduroys, striped polo shirts, and brown beanies linked together by one short, far matron. We went to watch mother.

Grandmother was Worthy Grand Matron of the Eastern Star. Mother was second in command and due to take over next year. Daughter had never before succeeded Mother in the history of the chapter. All the worthy women attended Grandmother at The Store. She had a special chair hidden away in the stacks of drugs. It had a big red pillow tied to the seat. I was in charge of getting the chair and putting it back. When grandmother saw that mother wasn't busy, I was sent to fetch her. She had to practice the secret words she had to memorize to be Worthy. Mother had a hard time remembering. I knew how hard it was to memorize because my Sunday School Class at Main Street Methodist was taking instructions on becoming full-fledged Christians. We had to answer all the questions just so-word for word- and I couldn't do it-so I knew I couldn't become a

member. I didn't want to anger God by pretending, so I told my teacher I'd have to do it next year. She said not to worry about it, that God would know but that I shouldn't tell the other kids because they knew even less than I and would feel bad and quit trying. I figured Grandmother must have told mother something like that too because, whenever mother hesitated, Grandmother said, "Don't stop no matter what-keep up the beat-mumble in a sing-songy way."

Mother's chanting always reminded me of the bald colored man who shined shoes at the barber's. He was supposed to have been in the Shelton Gang and to have murdered one of Charlie Birger' bodyguards. He'd massage and polish into your shoes real hard, squeezing your toes and looking up at you all the time without any expression on his face. All the time he grunted and groaned in a rhythmic way. Once he told me he'd already told ten lies and the eleventh would send him straight to hell. Counting up as hopefully as I could, I figured I had two to go.

Grandmother always made me handpack a quart of ice cream to take home. The more I could pack down into the paper bucket, the better man I'd be. Plunging down into ice cream wells made great red welts on my stomach because my toes just barely stayed on the floor. Little Frank (as everyone else called him) would urge me to scrape harder to get it out and pack harder, pack harder to get more for his pudgy tummy. At first I got blisters from scraping and packing.

We walked home about seven o'clock, always crossing the street before we got to the brightly lit Flying Red Horse. I got the impression Grandmother blamed the horse for father's death. I heard her say she had been upset at my mother's marrying a coalminer instead of going to some finishing school in Knoxville as Grandmother had planned.

The man who ran the station now had worked there when my father owned it. His name was Fred, and he frightened me. Maybe it was his ray-stubbed chin, or his funny smell - something more sour than gas or oil. Maybe it had to do with the batch of dead quail he threw on our porch one day. Sometimes, Frank and I sneaked up to the station because Fred gave us candy. Frank wanted to go all the time. When Fred saw us coming, he'd start singing "Frankie and Johnny," a song that enraged me. He'd talk the phrases and make jokes, like "Hi, lovers, why'd you do her wrong, Johnny?" or "Which one of you is the girl?" Once I hit him in the stomach, ran out into the drive, and started bawling and screaming, "Damn you, Fred. You sting - and you always need a shave too, and, uh, and you're just a big, dumb tease."

Mother pulled down my pants, leaned me across the end of my bed, and whacked me with the bristly side of a hairbrush, crying much louder than I all the while. I'd taunted her that hand-spanking didn't hurt. She said that hitting an adult or calling him names were terrible sins, worse even than lying. I collected all the hairbrushes in our part of the house and buried them in the muddy ground behind the evergreens.

On Sunday I repented. Usually I just doodled on the back of the program during Church, but my nine lies, Fred, and the hairbrushes combined to make me receptive to Christ's cleansing my soul. A visiting preacher called for sinners to come forth, so I popped out of my place at the end of the pew and trudged down to the altar. All the other kids in that row, my Sunday School Class, thought they were supposed to follow, so I led a procession.

Kneeling on the maroon carpet, my head on my forearms and hanging on to the communion rail with both hands, I was startled by the rustly of clothes quite near me. A bare arm was thrown around my neck and I smelled Fred's terrible smell. It was bang and my mother. I noticed Bang's eyes were green when she didn't squint. "Isn't he a doll?"

"No," my mother whispered, "he's my little Fritz."

I was astride the Flying Red Horse, clinging to his mane and crying for all I was worth. We were spiraling around the 1st National Bank, floor by floor by floor until the red neon tower came into sight. It went up and up into the rushing menace of slate-colored storm clouds in the night sky. The Red Horse plunged on and I clung tighter, on-up-through the clouds until I saw my father beckoning me with his sword and swinging round and round the tower, his plume pink and waving to and fro as it twined down the tower, like the vines of Jack's Bean Stalk. He was out of phase with the storm clouds blowing by. He'd throw his feet out and spin round the tower, bending

it like a bow but turning in slow motion with the wind blowing furiously at his back and whipping the red mane in my face. He sheathed his sword and cupped his mouth in one hand, Captain Hornblower from the poop deck, "Don't cry...Don't cry...Don't cryeee...." The wind stretched out the word and plunged the Red Horse deep into an icecream well. I was drowning and there were shouts all around me, "He's the one, tat's him, he took his finger out of the hole in the levee. He freed the flood. Go to hell, you! GO GO...."

A shaft of light was shining on me. It came from the partly opened door to mother's room. There were loud voices in Grandmother's house. Suddenly the door swung open and mother backed into the room in her underwear, her hands crossed in front of her face. Grandmother followed her, almost pushing her, then stopped. "You bitch!" Grandmother hissed, "You have *too* been drinking whiskey. You're drunk. You're a stinking, drunken bitch!" Grandmother lunged and slapped mother hard! Then again! I sat up and cried out but Grandmother kept slapping and mother just stood there bawling, not dodging or anything. I ran to them and Grandmother stopped. She looked stunned, like she didn't know me. She took a few steps into the room, then, circled out stiffly, like a German tank I'd seen in a movie.

I ran back to bed and turned away from the light. Mother kept sobbing and then came over and crawled into bed with me. She put her arm over my shoulder and pulled up against me, sniveling. I turned to kiss her and got the full, rank blast of her breath!

I turned away fast, thinking furiously. Absently I said, "Don't cry, mommy. Don't cry." I felt terrible. Drinking whiskey is so very bad! The church, the Eastern Star, Grandmother - just everyone knew that. A Bitch. My mommy's a Bitch. I must be a Son of A Bitch, then, like I'd heard people say so often. I moved mother's arm off me and she started to sob again but quieted when I stroked her hair, "Don't cry, mommy. Nitey-nite?" I waited for her standard response of "Sleep-tite, little Fritz!" She was asleep. Soon she was groaning, snoring, and talking in snatches." Ride high, Red Horse, ride...my dearest...my lover...so sorry...hurt so...need you...

As I lay there listening, I got warm and sleepy but lay awake for a long time. It was like being under a metal lawn chair in a heavy rain safe and dry but scary. Grandmother and Fred were alike. They weren't all bad, but they didn't really care about things. Nobody really cared if you tried. They just wanted to boss you. Mother and I were alike, even if she was fat and brown-eyed. We were alike in our dreams.

19.

Flower Garden
(For My Daughter Cassandra)

David Weese

It is spring
 and you are young
Yet today...
 briefly
I glimpsed your summer
 Dazzling, resplendent glory
That autumn will not fade

Yet today I am charged to be your gardener
 To tend beauty
 not always understood
To cause to flourish
 Things I do not know

Still---I am willing

Allow your beauty
 To open my eyes
Permit your petals
 Blossoming in the spring rain
 To open my heart

It is spring
 Natures' time for teaching
Teach me
 I am still young

20.

One Day With Benjamin

Debra Paulsen

The day began like many others: the sun glistening through the windows, the alarm buzzing in my ear, and Benjamin shaking me awake with, "Mom, will you make French Toast?" It's hard to refuse when he so often brags that I make the best French Toast in the whole wide world.

I grudgingly fell out of bed and headed for the kitchen. Unfortunately, the phone rang and I became preoccupied with the conversation. Too late I realized Benjamin was no longer beside me. I ran to the kitchen only to find my three year old squatted on the floor cracking an egg into a bowl (not to mention the six or seven that were splattered on the floor). I shouted, "What are you doing?" And with his composure intact, this blond bundle of energy shrugged and said, "Makin' French Toast".....and so continued my day with Benjamin.

There were a few uneventful hours as we did errands and went out to lunch. Things changed quickly when I pulled into the driveway, however. The front yard was flooded! The water from our garden hose had been running for over three hours. Not so calmly, I asked Benjamin, "Were you playing with the hose?" "No, Mom," he said with great dignity, "I watered your flowers for you." Then came the "thank-you" mixed with a speech concerning this unacceptable behavior.

Once the older kids arrived home from school, matters greatly improved. After all, the ratio of older people to Benjamin had increased. Now there were others to follow him around, to read to him, to explain to him, and to protect the house and him from him.

The evening was almost peaceful. The children played together wonderfully. After a brief reminder of the importance of following the directions of the recipe, they even made hot cocoa by themselves. I was sitting at the dining room table enjoying the evening paper when I glanced up at the ceiling. I could not believe my eyes. Instantly, I was on my feet shouting, "Everyone get in here, **NOW!**" Six children quickly scrambled in and anxiously waited to see what had gone wrong. I pointed to the marshmallow hanging from the ceiling and demanded, "Who did this?!" Every eye turned toward Benjamin. He was standing in the doorway with both hands covering his seat. My anger subsided as he looked up at me with big serious eyes and said ever so sweetly, "Mom, it was in the recipe." Punishment seemed silly after we all burst into laughter.

Well, finally it was time for bed. I had just finished the nightly routine of drinks, stories, prayers, and more drinks. I collapsed into bed and just enjoyed the silence. I was thinking about Benjamin. He is certainly a full-time job! I wondered how one person could consume so much of my time. And yet, he is enjoyable company. When I'm not angry with him or cleaning up one of his many messes, I'm usually smiling at one of his amusing questions or observations. My thoughts were then interrupted. It was Benjamin. He was up again! "Mom," he said as he put both of his little hands on my cheeks, "I love you." I held him close to me and told him I loved him too. As he scampered off to bed, I realized I was proud to know him and happy to be able to give him so much time. Then, thought I had better get to sleep because tomorrow would be another action-filled day with my Benjamin.

21.

Heartbreak

Mary Frances Lund

Child of my child, will I know you?
Will I hold and caress you,
read you a favorite story,
see your gleaming eyes on Christmas
morning, watch you grow?

Will you have your mother's smile?
Her wide blue eyes?
Her infectious laughter?

Will you have your grandfather's shiny
dark hair? His dry sense of humor?
His devotion to sports?

Will you have my little nose?
My stubborn sense of loyalty?
My passion for books and music?

Perhaps all these things---
perhaps none.
Will I know?

22.

Grand Central

Bill Yarrow

I choose to live
in the dead center of grandeur
on the banks of the Grand Central
Parkway, opposite Grand Central
Florist, across from Grand Central
Plumbing Supply. I attend Grand Central Church of
Christ Mohammed opposite
Larry's Grand Central Delicatessen and Mortuary. I
rent an apartment above
Grand Central College of Personal Skills adjacent
to Grand Central Costume Pharmacy in view of
Grand Central Boulevard Park.
I feel fortunate to live on the block which contains
Wayne's Grand Central Waxing,
The Original Grand Central Indoor Cafe,
Grand Central Jewels and Gymnasium, and Grand
Central Ritual Butchery. I am not
far from Grand Central Twin Cinema, Grand
Central Fruit Salon, or Grand Central
Haberdashery and Auction. I am a matriculated
student at Grand Central School of Welding
and Cosmetic Arts, exercise at Grand Central
Recreational Annex, house my car at Grand
Central Automotive Garage, take day trips
to Grand Central Gardens, and stay overnight
at Grand Central Convenience Motel occasionally.
I took Tai Chi lessons for 6 months at Grand
Central Tai Chi. I buy my food at Grand Central
Food, feed my cat from Grand Central Pet, and
deposit my dividend checks at Grand Central
Savings and Loan. Thank God I have never been
incarcerated in Grand Central House of
Corrections and Revisions. Thank God. I have
followed in my life a middle path of some
importance I think but there is more to be
attained. I aspire to a grander, more central
station in life.

23.

The Racist

Matthew J. Harmon

I talked to a man today,
he had wondered why God's children were
only colored white.
"Because," he said, "To be born another
color just isn't right."

This man believed that the whites should all
stay together.
For he thinks that others shall try to
prove that they're better.

And as I listened on to his tale of the
white man's woe,
I then saw the seeds of hatred that he did
sow.

For as a black would happen to come our way,
This man said to me, "Be careful, he'll
take our money away."

And as I saw this black man, he had love in
his heart,
For he said to me, "Let's be friends,
it'll be a start."

Just then I knew that racism was wrong.
For any man can sing a great song.

24.

Awakening

Janine Passehl

arise from slumbers
shallow tangles
to discover a
fresh and colorful
dawn
bursting forth
away from
ignorance toward
enlightenment and
acceptance of
diversity

25.

Bang! Just Like That!

Scott Erickson

"Say there, Bobby. What do we got on the ol' agenda for today?" Roger drawled as he nimbly hopped into the passenger seat of his partner's International Harvester pickup truck. In his left hand he gripped a steaming plastic coffee cup emblazoned with a huge Amoco trademark.

"Same old shit, amigo. I figure we'll ride around and pick up some dead things for a while---probably freeze our asses off---then go home." Bobby wasn't exactly the brightest guy to ever work for the Department of Transportation, but he was company on cold January mornings.

"Sounds like a plan. Hit it." They went through this same routine every morning. Same question, same response---same everything. The only change was the periodic shifting of the weather commentary. Neither man seemed to mind the redundancy. It was the kind of ritual that makes waking up before the sun bearable.

"Where ya wanna go first, Rog?" Bobby asked, "Route 49 or Blodgett Hill?"

"Blodgett."

Both men were state-employed D.O.T. crew workers. They made up half of what was jokingly referred to as the "pancake patrol" around the D.O.T. garages. Each morning, from five to noon, Bobby and Roger drove their bright orange pickup around town and removed the carcasses of animals killed in traffic. It was an unpleasant job to say the least, but for fifteen dollars an hour, anything can be suffered through.

"I wanna get the worst out of the way quick this morning. I think the wife put some lead in her biscuits. They might not be riding so easy come lunchtime."

Roger was easily twenty years older than Bobby, but to look at them they appeared like high school buddies. Both wore battered old flannel shirts, threadbare blue jeans, and heavy workboots. Perched on Roger's balding head was an aging Marlboro baseball cap. With the eerie grace of a lifetime smoker, Roger flicked open his chrome Zippo lighter and touched the flame to the end of his cigarette.

"I thought you were quitting that crap," Bobby snorted.

"Aw, shit---you're right." With that, he flicked the smoking butt out the window, a look of self-disgust on his face. "Pull over, man. Looks like we got our first customers." Blodgett Hill was always fertile ground for roadkill. The road was flanked by a somewhat thick forest that crept to within ten feet of the road at points.

Blodgett Hill itself was so steep that motorists cresting the rise could not see what was in the road until they were too close to avoid a collision. The asphalt was scarred with skidmarks from sudden swerves. That day, there were two possums on the side of the road, one about a hundred feet from the other. Bobby eased the International to the shoulder near the larger of the two.

"You get this one, Bobby, I got the other," Roger said, fishing in his shirt pocket for his pack of cigarettes. He lit one, then stomped it out after two drags.

The first possum lay on the gravel shoulder of the road like a discarded balloon. Its bloated body appeared ready to burst. All four legs were thrust straight up in the air. It grimaced at the smoke-gray sky.

"I wonder what they're thinking just before they check out," Roger thought aloud.

"What's that?" Bobby yelled.

"Nothing. I was just thinking about the way they look, all scared and stuff. I wonder what they think when they see that big old Peterbilt bearin' down on 'em.

"They don't think anything, man. It's too quick. No time to think. One minute it's wandering around, doing possum stuff---then Bang! Just like that it's over. That's how I wanna go. Bang!" He emphasized each Bang! by driving his right fist into his left palm.

"What are you, crazy? There can't be many things worse than ending up as road pizza."

"They say that survival is the slowest form of suicide. That cigarette in your mouth is probably the second slowest."

Roger quickly removed the smoke as if he didn't remember lighting it. Bobby shook his head slowly. "No way, man. None of that lingering death bullshit for me. I've seen too many good men broken

by diseases or injuries. Bang! Just like that. No time to be scared. No time to wonder about Heaven or Hell. Bang! I want it to be over before I even know it started."

Roger, too, had seen good men break. His father, a huge bear of a man, a lifetime factory worker who had survived the Depression and World War II, succumbed to lung cancer. The Big C had done what a year and a half in the Big One hadn't. He died screaming. Since then, Roger had been trying unsuccessfully to quit smoking. Already he could hear an unnerving rattle in his chest in the mornings.

He pulled his pack out of his shirt pocket and chucked it into some roadside shrubbery. Then he produced a pack of Wrigley's spearmint from his pants and shoved a stick into his mouth. The gum was a poor substitute for the nicotine he craved, but it helped. It only his father had tried....

Suddenly his body was seized by a racking, spasmodic series of violent coughs. He hawked up an amazing glob of phlegm and spat it out into the street.

Looking at that russett-colored stringy wad, Roger assumed it was too late. He was convinced that even if he never smoked another cigarette in his life, his fate had been decided. He had heard susceptibility to cancer was hereditary, and now the reality hit him. He felt his hand had been dealt. It was time to fold.

"Hey Bobby! Run back to the International and grab me a shovel, will ya?" Roger could hear the far-off thunder of a big rig.

"All right, amigo. Gimme a minute."

"No, man, ya get it now! I ain't got all day to stand here and stare at this possum." Roger hated to yell at Bobby, but it was the only way to get him to move sometimes.

"Fine! Jesus Christ! I'm getting it!"

Bobby disappeared behind the top of the hill. Roger began searching for his discarded pack of Camels. He found them near an old Burger King bag. He removed one, lit it, and tossed the pack back onto the ground. Then he threw his Zippo as far as he could into the woods. The truck's engine became ever louder. Dragging deeply on the cigarette, Roger strolled out into the street.

Calmly, he waited for the Bang.

26.

What I Am

Chris Savini

I am an atomic syringe,
the vaccination for the landscape,
the cure that kills the patient.

I am an aneurysm in society,
the killer that doesn't care,
sudden and cold, a kiss from God.

I am the one you beat down in school,
the weak one in the corner,
the one with the long memory.

I am your neighbor,
quiet and shy.
I'll give you fifteen seconds on the evening news.

27.

Orphan

Judy Bond

My love has nowhere to lodge;
it meanders through
my nerves aimlessly,
misbegotten,
mistaught---
my repulsive child
for whom I haven't time.
At night I hear its voice
exquisitely faint
and turn away
heartlessly deaf
to its cries
and anticipate death.

28.

Just Love Back

Dan Anderson

The fountain of my knowledge spans
from the endless pools of misunderstanding
as I read the reasons too deep
in every love attempt failed

my reality has no place for
the unspoken heart of
sympathetic whimpers and fallacies.
Only because distorted images
of my fate are entwined in the eroding
center of the of the infinite reflection.

I wish my expressiveness would be enough
but, it returns disappointed, unanswered.
So I find I must release my emptiness
before all I have is my insatiable desire
to know the spiteful caress of
IF!

29.

Making a Meal Out Of Nothing

Bill Yarrow

Knowledge in the vacuum is not
knowledge but imagination,
obese, overfed by red meat fear
and the sugar of doubt.
A solidity of pretended catastrophe.
The wealth and scourge of self.

Knowledge in the vacuum is
the massive untruth of half-true,
the inverse heaven of certainty,
the hungry unfuture,
the palpable hell of perhaps.

Our minds fatten too quickly
on the ordure of imagining.
We bloat in the dark, then burst.
Of all dying this is worst.

30.

Ours was said...

Janine Passehl

Ours was said to be the greatest treehouse in the area. Oh, sure, others were nice or even cute, but none could compare to the formidable structure that my brother and his friends erected while in the eighth grade. Made from scraps of wood and even doors discovered in alley garbage cans, it wasn't the most attractive treehouse but it was definitely the most interesting. It had three and a half levels - the top of which reached higher than the sun-deck that was the roof of our family room. A rope hung from one of the highest branches of the tree and served either as a vine or a spiderweb, depending on whether you were playing Tarzan or Superman. My brother and his friends would swing from the treehouse to the sun-deck battling imaginary foes and fighting for justice. At first I was not allowed in the treehouse at all - I was too young, they told me. But I soon proved my worth, balancing trays of Oreo cookies and tall glasses of milk up the tall ladder, and they soon decided that I would make a wonderful maid. I spent my time cleaning and keeping things in order for the boys until I was deemed good enough to enter, as long as I kept out of their way. When he was gone at some sporting practice or another, my friends and I would ramble through the enormous mouth of the tree under the first level, pull ourselves up, and hide away in the enclosed room that made up the second level. This was where we would go to talk about boys, play truth or dare, or just revel in the fact that we were such agile tree climbers. It was what we called the "carpet room." The floor was covered with the brown shag carpet that had once covered our basement floor, and all four walls were graced with carpet samples of various psychedelic shades. There was a hinged door that led down to the first level and even had a lock on it for added privacy. On the smallest wall there was an opening, large enough for a person to fit through, that led to the veranda - a small area onto which we would step when we wanted to take a break and smoke one of our bubble-gum cigarettes. Yes-siree, we thought that we were pretty cool.

Every once in awhile my friends and I were allowed to spend the night in the treehouse, and this

was an exciting occasion for us. Up to the carpet room we would bring our flashlights, blankets, and pillows, though I can't remember once when our heads actually rested on them. In the middle of the night we would climb down the ladder and walk the six blocks to the donut shop. We would always order one donut at the counter, then take a dozen home and eat them until the sun came up. To this day the scent of wet, dew-covered leaves evokes memories of the best donuts and the silliest conversations. I often think of those days and dream of a time in the future when my own children will construct a treehouse of their own and share in the same wonderful experiences that I did.

I still live in that same house six blocks from the donut shop, but the tree no longer exists in reality. It was cut down because it was thought to be rotten and the neighbors worried that it would fall on their roof. A few years back I met someone who, when they found out where I live, proceeded to tell me what a popular attraction our treehouse was. He grew up in a neighborhood not far from mine and went to a different school, but he and his classmates used to speak in awe of the greatest treehouse in the area...mine.

31.

Sissy

John Stobart

Indian Summer had spoiled us. We had grown used to playing late after supper. That Saturday night would probably be the last. It was getting dark too early. I rushed to the door carrying a slab of pumpkin pie, but Mom collared me and told me to stay on the block.

A game of war had already started in the alley. I was tempted to stop but sneaked past the kids, then started running toward the sun. I had promised and was afraid not to show.

After a block I slowed to a jog, imagining myself the champ doing roadwork for a big fight, snorting rhythmically. The sun was setting too fast, though, so I speeded up, feeling the cold.

Breathing puffs of fog, I stopped across the street from the warehouse, five long blocks from home. The old building was in shadow except for the west side. Its old-fashioned front seemed different in the sunset, the crumbly mortar and fading white brick weren't so obvious. Those guys had better be in there!

I decided to check my repairs on the circus poster tacked to the boarded-up window on the west side. I had patched up the tiger section of the poster that afternoon with Bazooka. The bullwhip dangling from the trainer's hand reminded me of the King Snake Sonny had killed the day we started work on the pyramid. Sonny had threatened us with that snake while we built the pyramid that day, flicking it lazily on the bales as we lifted, yelling "HEAVE, slaves, HEAVE!" It didn't take the rats long to find that King Snake wasn't around anymore. Now they had the run of the place. Sonny's a dummy. A big, tough dummy.

I circled around back to the truck entrance on the east, sticking close to the foundation so's nobody would see me. The foundation was damp and chalky. I made my voice as gruff as I could with the password, "Open Sesame. A man awaits."

NOTHING.

I turned to leave, but thought again. They're testing me! Sonny and Johnny live much closer to the warehouse than I do. We all left for supper at the same time. They should be in there. But would they stay in the dark?

I swiveled my white baseball cap around like a catcher to be able to squeeze through the jimmied garage door. Hugging the doorframe, I wedged my right leg into the dark then wriggled halfway through, shoving back the heavy door a bit with my rump and running my right hand up and down the moist brick wall in search of the light switch. The wall was much more damp inside than out. I'd

never noticed that before. The sour popcorn smell of straw was stronger too. As the switch clicked, I heard the scratch of a rat scurrying for cover across the old plank floor.

I tried to look casual as I stomped across the room. The only lightbulb in the place hung from the ceiling on the other side of the pyramid. Sonny and Johnny could be hiding almost anyplace. "Oh illustrious Tut! Serpents and King of the Nile! It is I, your chief builder come to do your bidding."

NOTHING.

Feeling silly, I backed toward the door, snickering to myself. Those guys are just chicken, that's all. Sonny and Johnny both, the two of them, were together, and there was more light then and they....

A crunching footstep on the cinders outside the door cut off my thought. Ha! I'd fool them. They'd never expect me to be in there alone. Maybe I could scare them away by making rat scratches. Ha! I'd never let Sonny forget if he ran.

I tip-toed to the mouth of the third tunnel in the pyramid, dropped to all fours and backed into the entrance, kicking behind as I went, until just my head was exposed. The bill of my cap cut into my neck in that position so I swiveled it back to the front, rapped the floor with my fist, and backed all the way into the tunnel. Damn! The light! Oh well, Sonny might think it was always on at night.

Just to be safe, I banged the bales of hay on my right side, reassuring myself that the scratching I heard came from deep in the pyramid. The straw was seventeen bales square at the base - two bales for a wall, a tunnel, two more bales, another tunnel, and so on. There were five tunnels on each side making twenty entries to a maze that grew more and more confusing the further in you crawled or the higher you climbed. The pyramid was nine levels high, with new tunnels every other tier. It wasn't a perfect pyramid shape, but sort of looked like one.

I got the idea for the pyramid from Reader's Digest, an article about the Grimm Brothers - not the ones who wrote those fairy tales. These guys were real lunatics! They crammed bales of newspapers all through a six-story brownstone in New York, making tunnels all over and booby-trapping them to keep their enemies out. One of the brothers was killed falling into his own trap, impaled on stakes and smothered under bales and bales of newspapers.

I read it to the gang. Sonny insisted we have a trap too, but I usually sneaked in and took the broken bottles and stuff out so nobody would get hurt bad. That's where he put the dead King, though, like the Cobra in the Jungle Book - guarding the sacred treasure.

Over a dozen guys had worked all day one Saturday, mostly kids from my class at Logan, fourth-graders. We probably wouldn't have made it so elaborate, though, if Sonny and his gang hadn't horned in and made us heft the bales up to the highest levels. We had moved hundreds of bales, making it as confusing as we could. There were dead-end tunnels, cross-tunnels, and places like stairways where you could climb up or down one level.

We invented a game called Mummy. The one who was the Mummy had to find someone in the maze and mummy him by grabbing him and counting to three. Then the two would search out the others until everyone was Mummy. With seven or eight players, the game would take about an hour because there were so many places to hide and the tunnels were long, dark, and rickety. After every game we had to stop to fix the cave-ins.

I hadn't heard a thing but rats. It seemed I'd been in that tunnel long enough for a football team to come in. I'd just decided to crawl out when someone hissed at me from a short distance. "Fritz! Fritz!"

I didn't quite know the voice.

"I can hear you in there, Fritzie. Come on out and play."

I edged back a few feet. The voice sounded scratchy and old. Maybe there was a watchman.

"I saw you come in here, Fritzie. I know I did. You snuck in here all by your lonesome, didn't you little boy?"

How did he know my name? He sounded scary. I moved further back searching for the first cross-tunnel with the toe of my sneaker. Maybe he wasn't sure I was still there.

"Why don't you answer, tiger? Cat got your tongue?"

I kept quiet.

"I've been watching you play in here for over a week, Fritz. Don't worry. I won't squeal on you. I could have done that a long time ago. I want to play too."

Finding the cross-tunnel I crawled forward through it slowly, feeling for the first slanted bale to the second tier. A loose strand of baling wire scratched my cheek and I gasped, choking the impulse to scream. Reaching the second level made me feel much safer. Nobody knew that maze better than me! I made my voice tough. "What do you want?"

"I've told you, child, over and over! I've come to play, like at school."

While he was talking, I moved deeper into the second level. I could crawl up or down to a tunnel in a hurry. "Are you one of Sonny's gang?"

"It doesn't matter, little boy. I want to play with you! You probably don't even know me. Of course, everyone

knows you, big man. That's why I just can't wait to play with you."

"I don't know what you mean. You from Logan?"

"That's for me to know and you to find out! Guess! You like games, don't you? Don't you? Well, answer me, damn you to hell!" I

thought he sounded closer. He was tracing my voice. I spoke louder than I had before, to mislead him, then moved up to the third tier. "It's too late to play! Mom's expecting me any minute now!"

"Why, surely you're too big for a curfew. Why, you're big enough to do whatever you want. You can play anyway you want, remember? Don't be a sissy now. You're a big man. I'll even let you tackle me in the hay. I'll bet it'll be a lot softer than the gravel on the playground."

Then I knew. It was Alvey, the weird new kid at school - a tall, blond eighth-grader. I'd hardly ever heard him talk before. I didn't even know his first name. He always wore a peacoat with his wrists sticking out and was always standing at the door to school with his sister, a seventh-grader. They were a strange pair. Anyone could tell they were related. She too wore a peacoat and was skinny. They were both anemic-looking. They always stood around together with their hands stuck in their pockets.

One day early in September I grabbed him from behind in a game of Drag 'em Home. My buddies helped me drag him across the playground to goal, him hollering all the way that he wasn't playing. Sonny and his gang started razzing Alvey about us little fourth-graders getting the best of him. Sissy, they chanted. Sissy! Sissy! Sissy! He turned his back on them in his snooty way and started walking off. I saw he was off-guard, so I tackled him from the side - spilling him hard then scampering out of reach. I expected a chase.

He just got up slowly and looked at his hands, ignoring everyone's eyes. Then he whirled around and walked off.

After that he was an easy mark. That week I must have bush-whacked him a half-dozen times. I'd run at him from behind and stiff-arm him between the shoulder blades. In the hallway one day I dropped my knees into the hinges of his calves - hard - hanging onto his shoulders at the same time.

NOTHING.

Well, if he wanted to get even now, it was going to be my game. He could try to catch me in the pyramid.

"Hey Alvey. Sissy Alvey. Is that you, sissy? If you wanna play, you're gonna have to come in the dark with me. This is where I play."

He was quiet for a minute. I figured he wasn't about to chase me in there, but when he spoke I could tell he had come closer. "Listen, boy-child! I'd advise you to come out now and take your medicine. I do wild things when I get mad! Really I do."

"Fraid of the dark, pussycat? Come on in! The rats are more afraid of you than you are of them. They're sissies too." I was beginning to enjoy myself.

"You're the only rat in there! I think I'll just wait here for you. Your mother will be expecting you soon."

"Oh, no. No hurry at all. She's playing Bingo at Sodality."

"You're lying, child. Sodality doesn't start till 8:30. Everyone knows that! You are a dummy, aren't you!"

I laughed, "No! I'm a mummy. I'm a mummy in the dark. And you're too sissy to play!"

"You know what, bigshot? You love the dark so much, I think I'll just turn off the light and leave you with the other rats."

"Big wow! You're scaring me to death, sissy." He sounded like my father. I was half a mind to fight Alvey and get it over with. I really wasn't scared now that we had talked. I couldn't delay much longer without getting a strapping anyway. Then he said something that did tingle my spine.

"Have you got a knife, Fritz? I'll use mine if I have to go in there after you."

"Oh dry up and blow away! How could such a skinny sissy be so full of so much hot air! You're just trying to scare me, skinny. It's you that's scared. Skinny is a sissy...skinny is a siss....

He screamed like an Indian and charged the pyramid, tossing the heavy bales around like they were orange crates. A tunnel collapsed and he screamed again. Then he was thrashing and kicking just below me and to my right, still between me and the door. He was buried so long I thought about helping him, but he rose from the cave-in like a whale surfacing from the deep, wheezing and cursing and swinging his arms wildly about. He took a deep breath then snarled, "You'll be sorry, you little brat!"

He crawled down the tunnel right below me, scraping his toes behind him. He was headed for the middle of the maze, but I was afraid to make a break for the door as long as he was on the ground. I crawled up the tunnel to the next stairway. When I stopped, everything was quiet. Then I heard the shoes scuffling. "Hey, sissy! We can't play down there. Come on up!"

He roared in anger, standing straight up through the lowest tier and clambering up the bales so violently he shook my perch. Then he crawled into my tier, mumbling to himself and breathing very loud. I smiled so hard I could feel a giggle leaking out as I slipped down the

stairway to ground level. I stifled the laughter churning in my stomach and started out. The tunnel was blocked by his cave-in but enough light was coming through then for me to crawl over them quietly. He was still rooting around somewhere deep in the maze as I backed to the doorway. The laughter was bubbling out of me, and I got the idea for the perfect exit - I flicked off the light!

And was grabbed from behind!

I broke loose but didn't know where to run. I heard him thrashing around, yelling for light. When it came on I found myself exchanging stares with the Alvey girl. Her mouth seemed terribly small and busy but she said nothing.

I backed into a lighted corner and took a loose fighting stance. "You touch me again, girl, I'll give you a fat lip."

She moved back to the door then, her brother arriving bug-eyed and flushed, the tendons on his neck throbbing.

"Look," I said, trying to be calm as he closed in on me, "You two big kids can't gang a little guy like me! It's not fair!" He had straw sticking out from his hair and his peacoat. His face was covered with a fine dust that had smudged beneath his eyes. There was blood on his cheek.

"Look, Alvey, that was a good chase. Why don't you two come around tomorrow and we can build the tunnel back. We play a game here called Mummy...." He looked like he didn't hear me, and he kept closing in. When he got too close, I feinted with my left hand and threw a right hook into his breadbasket, smashing my knuckles into a metal belt buckle I hadn't noticed.

Alvey cackled when he saw I'd hurt my hand. Suddenly, he was slapping my head from right to left and back again, like he was tossing a ball from hand to hand with flicks of his bony wrists and fingers.

I'd never been slapped in a fight before, not even once. Then he was slapping me around at will until I wrestled him to the floor, blinded by tears and with bloody lips.

Alvey rolled on top of me, then sat up choking me quiet with one hand. The other hand was holding one of those all-purpose Boy Scout knives. He tossed it to his sister, who opened the little blade and handed it back. She didn't need any instructions.

Alvey stuck the blade in my left nostril, edge up, and slowly tugged it through the flesh. Then he stuck the point of the blade into the flesh below my left eye.

"Enough!" The girl shouted, and Alvey instantly stopped, grabbed my T-shirt, pulled it taut, and sliced the front in half like it was a watermelon.

He grabbed my nipples and twisted, screaming, "Sissy, sissy, sissy," as if chanting. The pain intensified with every twist, and he seemed to twist harder and faster, frantic to make me understand his madness and to surrender to his will.

Instead I fainted.

Nothing.

And when I awoke I thought of the king snake, and I too was cold and alone and broken.

32.

A Morning's Vision

Ellen Fabrizio

I stood, a sleepy visionary,
sipping coffee, tepid but strong,
idling in a wistful moment
savoring a day intensely blue and green.

I heard the drone of distant traffic,
moving specks on the horizon,
I saw half built buildings changing
landscapes, encircled by debris.

These perceptions nealy shattered
the morning's entrancing moment,
But for the peaceful green of a vacant
field, still alive and lush.

Then my senses were inflamed,
not by empty nourishment of coffee,
but by a symmetrical expansion
brightly green against the sky.

A solitary weed tree,
perfect in its beauty,
Nature's sole remnant
in the midst of man's prosperity.

As I watched, frozen,
transfixed by wonder
Suddenly, a limb plunged
quickly to the ground.

I stared in shock at the distant
scene, and perceived a figure
in the brilliant green heights.
Then I turned, because I couldn't
bear to stand still and watch
the execution of a tree.

33.

Flight

Dawn Benoit

The airplane rolls forth
Breaking from the bonds of earth
At once, I am free

34.

Must Be Belgium

Judy Bond

Maybe if the day were Tuesday
instead of what it is
whatever that may be
or maybe
isn't;
if Tuesdays were grassblades
in late spring
after days of rain
dazed by rain
reigned in by a cordon
of bleu showers;
if I were god
I might be happy.

Alas! Tuesdays are not botanical
and today is what it is - mechanical.
You and I
cannot be maybe
or yes or no
but a question mark
after an assertion of existence;
mere figs in the figmentations
of our imagined minds.

But our legs are strong...
and we can dance
indefinitely.

35.

Silent Interlude

Dan Anderson

The silhouettes of the world
transform into my worst nightmares,
as the darkness grows colder
and my fear
increases.

I ask, shall I be consumed,
only to become my fear, or,
will I be left as a lasting
memory of my kind to live
out my misery?

36.

The hot ash...

Bob Czernik

The hot ash fell on my chest,
I lie
uncomfortably, wrapped.
In the arms of a stranger
I awoke
to hot breath
on my ear.

Saw waves of perspiration
roll
down
her
chest.
Her breast felt cold.
The ceiling fan
provides a background to our breaths.
WHO IS THIS!
I scream,
only to be silenced
by her lips.

37.

Alarm

Scott Erickson

Banshee wail severs the serenity
Snatching me from my primordial suspension
Light screams into my darkness
If ignorance is bliss,
What could be closer to heaven than oblivion?
Denied that,
I am
Thrust
From my free-floating stygian paradise
Back to this harsh
Frigid plane of right angles
and responsibility
With one shrill
Mindless screech it has
Lacerated my warmth
And redelivered unto me
The horrors of the womb.

38.

Corrupted Heroes

Dan Anderson

Walking the wastelands
seemingly invincible
They are such fools for believing themselves
Gods.
Their true feelings are expressed
when they're alone.
The hypocrite crawls out
proving their images false.
We are fools for following these
people but, we shall never
learn.

39.

A Moment in History

T.L.Chapin

Behold! The Prince of Rebellion is here!
What a price to pay for the freedom of humanity! It shows upon his face, which was young upon one time.
Now, he is old and tired, and it is not yet over.
There is much, much to do!
Half of these hallowed states have fallen to the Prince.
And need to be rebuilt, then there are the people.
Let them come, free into our lives, into our hearts.
"With malice toward none," let them come.
Father Abraham,, I, the poor, the black am free.
Are you, Father Abraham, are you free?
The war is over, but not the cost: the dead, the destroyed.
The war ended with the fall of Richmond, but the shadows remain.
The shadows of ruin, the ruins of lives, the lives of black and white together.

A night to be remembered, through books, through dreams.
A derringer thrust to the back of his head, while the show goes on, unknowing.
"Sic semper tyrannas," thus ever to tyrants.
And now he is dead, yet "He lives in the hearts of the people."
Lie him in a quiet place, upon his martyred death.
Now, lie in peace, blameless knight, who fought the Prince.
Father Abraham, you've saved us, for one moment in history!

40.

Fossil Fuel

Dawn Benoit

From a man made inferno
the sparkling ashes fall.

Plunging down ten stories
from the boiler wall.

The heat of a prehistoric cremation
becomes the kilowatts produced
at Joliet Station.

41.

Environmental Doom

Kevin McHale

O' how the years have come and gone,
As the sands of our hourglass lye;
So much was here and now is not,
On what day will we open our eyes.

The skies one day were full of birds,
So many years ago;
It fills only with pollution now,
So where do these birds have to go.

The water we have to fill the earth,
Was once so cool and clean;
It houses now the dirt and grime,
Of vessels that rule the sea.

The forests we have to feed the earth,
With air and food alike;
Lose their space to ignorant souls,
Who doom their chance of life.

So now the pages near the end,
To tell the tale of mankind;
Of how our species sold out to greed,
How could we be so blind.

42.

Dusted

Chris Savini

I unsettled the dust with my footsteps.
I stepped through puddles of shadow.
And swam through darkness.
I smelled the city
Dusty, dirty, old, and molding,
Festering in my nostrils,
Reacting with my brain,
An orgasmic shudder throughout my tissue.
I convulse with the city,
I pulse with the city.
My hands shake with its potency,
My vision blurs with its speed.
Until I have to sit down with the dust
and settle.

43.

Reverie

Mary Frances Lund

I remember you
as you sat in my blue velvet chair
the last time.
How you sank into its peacefulness
and breathed deeply the scent of me.

You sat in blue velvet
and cradled my favorite coffee mug
and listened to me play Chopin etudes
and Debussy's "Reverie,"
letting my music soothe your restlessness.

You sat in blue velvet
and told me stories---
over and over the stories
of pain and abandonment,
of guilt and remorse,
of pills and drink that left pink scars
that I touched so gently with my fingertips--
and scars that lie deep beyond my touch.

I let you leave,
wanting you to stay,
and my tears blended with yours.

I remember you,
living in a borrowed world.

44.

Reply to Marlowe

Maggie Clay

i HAVE NO NEED FOR A SHEPHERD
fOR HE WON'T BRING ME LOVE
nOR WILL A FISHERMAN OR FARMER
uNCAGE A WAITING DOVE

i DON'T LONG FOR THE HANDS OF THESE MEN
tO EVOKE MY LOVE
fOR FROM WORKING OUTSIDE ALL DAY
tHEY ARE JUST TOO DIRTY AND ROUGH

nOR WOULD NATURE PROVIDE FOR ME
iF I SHOWERED *THEM* WITH MY LOVE
fOR THEY DON'T HAVE THE POWER
tHAT i SPEND DAYS AND NIGHTS DREAMING OF

iT'S THE MAN I CRAVE FOR THAT
cAN DO ANYTHING AT ALL
hE HAS NO NEED TO WAIT OUT THE SEASONS
fOR SUMMER TO BE FALL

aND HE CAN WITHOUT A CENT
sHOWER ME WITH GIFTS
sO THEN THERE IS NO NEED
fOR HIM TO BE RICH

aND I WON'T HAVE TO GUESS WHAT'S ON HIS MIND
bECAUSE IT WILL BE IN BLACK AND WHITE
i LONG FOR A POET
a MAN WHO WRITES

wITH HANDS LEFT SOFT AND SUPPLE
fREE TO CARESS
wITH BODY HEART AND SOUL YEARNING
tO DO THE REST

i WANT TO BE THE ONE HE LONGS FOR
tHE MUSE OF A GREAT WORK
i HAVE NO USE FOR SOME SHEEP-HERDER OR FISH CATCHER
oR PLOWER OF THE EARTH

bUT IF YOU ARE A BLEEDING HEART
tHEN I PROFESS MY LOVE TO THEE
fOR *THEN* NATURE WOULD PROVIDE
aND THE MOUNTAINS WOULD SHELTER US IN OUR
POETRY.

45.

Voyeur

Scott Erickson

A perfect white triangle
Pristine, blackly exciting
A trinity I would gladly worship
Visible for a mere instant
As she uncrossed
and re-crossed
Her flawless legs
She doesn't know I see
Here
In my world across the room
But I do.
A private exhibition for my benefit alone.
My tongue darts across her milk-white thighs
My eyes embrace her darkness
I can hear her flesh whisper across the cotton
Smell the musk of her heat
I know every perfect inch of her
She knows none of mine
Delicious and forbidden
Therefore irresistable
I need to own her
But I know she will return to her perfect home
Talk to her beautiful family
And sleep in her immaculate bed tonight
While I will be alone, naked and pathetic
Hating myself in the darkness.

46.

Mind

Matthew Page

Let me take you to a new land--
Let me show you the way--
To this new land we will go to--
Don't worry--I go there every day.
It is like nobody elses;
It can be all you want to;
Don't fear of being put down--
Don't let your dreams of white castles
Crumble beneath the cold ground.
This is your landscape to play with--
Add your trees and grassy lands.
Fill your skyline with a pure blue--
What you wish of is what you can.
Just examples let me mind you--
You can color your sky grey;
You can bring down your white castle--
You can let it waste away.

47.

Forbidden

Janine Passehl

arms outstretched
embrace desperation
reaching
grasping the necessity
of lust
sensual anguish
urgently quenched as
i am wrapped in
your essence
a cloak of your soul
warm and protected for
these few fleeting moments
clinging like static
once there and then
gone

48.

Crazy Mary

Sarah Elizabeth Kremsner

I am junkie junkie
I am sloppy cupcake
I am silly hat
I am mumbojumbo
I am fuscia flowers
propped in a pop bottle
green glass long necked pedals (sic) tapping
at the sky tapping at the
sky tapping at the sky

or I am nuttier than a fruitcake

49.

Procrastination Nowhere

Matthew Page

In the darkest realms he searched for light;
In the deepest grief did he search for peace;
In the clouded isolation he searched for comrades;
In the latest news did he search for harmony;
In the youngest child he searched for answers;
In the distant cry did he search for laughter;
In the nearing end he searched for a beginning;
In the cruel world did he search for relevance;
In the evident doom he searched for relevance;
In the final hour did he search for a plea of time.

50.

Joe (1974-1992)

Bob Czernik

Willows danced
in the breeze
mocking his pain.
That breeze
chilled his soul
as it called his name.
A grasshopper played
a lonely blues song.
The cold metal felt
warm
as he held the gun.
FUCK THEM
he roared
as he blew himself away.

Just another day,
Just another day.

51.

You Were the First

Bill Yarrow

You were the first to be
found head down in the sewage
of what we do for a living
but time will purify that.
Your wife is losing weight
in the hope that grief will
make her body attractive
and it will. She is radiantly
unhappy without you
but worse off is Carol
wrapped in the newspaper
that announced your death.
She never wore clothing like that.

52.

Living?

Judy Bond

"I'll send you to live with your father.
See how you like *that*." ...

fate worse than death---
it was time to shape up...

been shaping up all my life...

I sit properly
legs together
never expose too much flesh
or *any* soul.
I do not tell secrets;
my voice is rather subdued;
toned down
to fit a lady
which is what I think
I'm supposed to be
but I'm not really sure.
I do know one thing:
I wouldn't like
living with my father now
because he died.
Maybe I did too.

53.

Latent Wisdom

Dan Anderson

Fear manifests from itself
and the evil that will always exist
Hatred flows like a swinging arm
ready to strike heard with its fist

The pain is unbearable
the horror is excruciating
you may feel that love will save you
but it will only leave you waiting

You shall feel the fear now;
the fear of being put over the edge,
but once you have experienced the fear,
you will be left only with knowledge.

54.

Whores and Hypocrites

Steve Hanson

Although I am not anymore,
there was a time when I was a whore.
But, before you cast a stone at me
you should learn that I shared your company.
You mold your hopes to what is accepted
without realizing your will has been bested.
Society will enslave you, that is your fate.
Imprisoned by the system you perpetuate.
If you were to seek you would find,
you are losing the will to speak your mind.
Your opinions may some feathers ruffle
so you defeat yourself without a scuffle.
Like the prostitute's half-hearted squeal
you say things that you do not feel.
At the master's feet like loyal dogs you fall.
Your learned ambitions make whores of you all.

55.

The Kremlin...

Sam Wilson

The Kremlin sits away on high
  Behind its crimson walls,
And all around the president
  Guards occupy the halls.

Outside his inner sanctum,
  The massed people surge and 'cede:
"We support you, We denounce you-
  Get up and pay us heed."

So Boris from his place enthroned,
  From his guards takes leave
And goes to see the ones he loves,
  In hope of fulfilling their dreams.

Once he arrives in that great sea,
  All around him he hears:
"Our problem is, nothing gets done
And it brings us all to tears."

Boris knows that one course remains,
  And fearlessly pursues it;
The parliament is soon abolished--
  Damned if he didn't do it!

The people again surge and 'cede,
  The parliament will not move,
But Boris plans to smoke them out,
  And a real government leave.

56.

Can You Feel Me?

Mary Frances Lund

How inconceivable that you could leave
for an entire year---
you who tasted my tears,
you whose gentleness calmed my rage,
you who shared my sorrow!

Willingly, eagerly, you went,
while I struggle with the faith
that called you to such a distant place.
I try to picture you living in squalor,
with little to nourish you
but beets and cabbage---
struggling to communicate
in an unfamiliar tongue---
in a land of babushkas and icons,
of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov,
of balalaikas and czars.

Instead I see your dark, shining eyes
and beaming smile
brightening the darkest hovel
as you brightened my blackest days.

Can you feel my soul seeking yours---
the tie between us
spanning oceans and continents
to pierce the heart of Holy Mother Russia?

57.

Insomnia

Judy Bond

For hours
I've been watching
silent movies
of executions--
hogs, cattle,
aristocrats:
a continuous slaughter
played out too real
(I think)
to be a dream
but I cannot
in any case
fall asleep
while the darkness
dances with shrouds
disguised as veils.
Morning comes
and first lights
cleave the night;
its halves separate,
fall away
and hit the soft earth.
I listen for the first thud
know the terrible thing
has happened
and smile to myself.
I am Lefarge;
I can stop knitting
now and sleep.

58.

A Very Short Fish Story

Bob Bartlett

"Bite me!" said the rude-dude swimmer
To mama shark who wanted dinner.
Bite she did, and it was gory;
End of swimmer, end of story.

59.

Star Holes

Margaret Carroll Redmond

I

Three sisters sit
In highbacked
Chairs like swans they
Gaze out at the Chesapeake
That is just beginning to
Ripple it is so Hot.

"Look at Orion," says one.
"Where?"
"See the pole star?"
She takes the other's hand
Points, the feel
Of her knowing
Burning like
Tears.

"Where did you learn
This?"

"In the Book of Stars, it has
Pictures of real things, the hunter
The bear, Casseopia."
All of it
So simple but it was beyond me
Then.

My God she would have made a great
Teacher, I can see her in front
Of my classroom teaching the
Stars.

Thinking she taught me
Stars, way back when I could
Listen almost as well as anyone
And God, she
Was good at it.
She was the star
Goddess, and worshipped
Too.

She valued
Me.
I fell from
That grace, violent
And fast, all over before
I knew it, like an
Operation.

Always and still
I see in the night skies
Holes
The stars have Left.

II

Three sisters
Lay on a night
Hill watching for shooting
Stars, "There goes one,"
The star goddess says, "Look.
See how its starshine
Tail darts through the
Black sky, holes in its
Wake."

I look up in time to
See the space it left
Behind, thinking
Have I missed everything
Of importance? Watching
Instead, a mind turned
Inward on itself, sommersaulting
High wiring, jumping from thought to
Thought, like a rock
Crossing a creek
Circus.

Note: This poem began collecting in my mind when I read Alice Walker's "To My Sister, Who in the Fifties Left Us." My sister, Joanne Redmond Denworth, was like a shooting star in my young life - brilliant, flashing, and then she was gone. I miss how she was part of my everyday life. When an older sibling leaves for college, everyone says, oh you will still see them.. But something is changed forever when they leave. You are left with an emptiness like the black holes stars leave in their wake.

60.

The Mysterious Orchard

Debra Paulsen

I was lying on my back in the apple orchard. The combination of warm sun, the brisk breeze and the tantalizing aroma were mesmerizing. I felt so akin to nature, so tranquil and removed from civilization. I was rather enjoying the sensation when I happened to notice the scene to the east.

The four shiny grain bins protruded high above the gravel driveway. Joined to the bins was the new elevator with the leg and cross auger. Strange, but everything suddenly seemed so 'mechanical'. I felt nauseous as I looked upon the large green tractor with its huge dual wheels, air conditioning and AM/FM radio. Our 70' X 100' tool shed embarrassed me. What, only yesterday, had seemed impressive now was obviously grotesque. Farming suddenly seemed like a very complicated and high-tech way of life. It all seemed so overwhelming. I began to long for a simpler way.

I turned back to the orchard view. It was more beautiful than I had remembered. The blossoms seemed more fragrant and the air more crisp. I realized it was approaching noon and Mom would be expecting me for dinner.

As I headed through the orchard, I felt strangely different. When I came to the meadow I stopped. The landscape was totally unfamiliar. Where was our brick ranch home? Where were the gas tanks? And our van? What was going on?!

I slowly approached the farm yard. There was an old, white two-story house. It was surrounded by a white picket fence. The house had a large porch, complete with a swing and a couple of wooden rocking chairs. I cautiously continued toward the house when I heard a man speak to me.

"Susan" he said, "Where have you been? Your little brother has looked all over for you. Ma needs some more wood. Samuel is busy helping me with fence mending, so you go down to the timber and drag up one of the downed sapling. Well....what are staring at girl? There's work to do, so get going." "Alright," I said as I turned to find a timber.

It was weird! He spoke to me as if I were his daughter. What was he thinking? Who in his right mind would ask a twelve-year old girl to drag a tree! Not only that, but my older brother, Samuel, didn't know how to fix a fence. He was only fourteen! Well, I spotted some trees and assumed it was a timber. I went and looked for a small dead tree.

When I located a tree, I started dragging it toward the house. It was so heavy! The muscles in my arms started aching and my hands were on fire from the blisters. Finally I arrived at the house. A boy that looked alot like my ten-year old brother, Seth, came running out to help me. "What took you so long, Sis? Ma is waiting. I'm supposed to chop it while you go in and help her." "O.K." I said numbly, as I walked toward the house.

"There you are! I was getting worried, dear. Are you feeling alright?" the woman asked as she came and put her hand on my forehead. "You don't look right, but you don't have a fever." "I'm fine, just tired and thirsty," I said to this woman who was my mother. She looked at me for a moment then said "Very well, run on down to the creek and bring back some water. Then get your Pa and Samuel for dinner." I started out the door, somewhat in a daze, when she called after me, "Don't forget the bucket, Susan."

As I gazed into the smooth water I was again shocked. It was me, but I looked totally different. Then I looked down at myself for the first time since I'd left the orchard. I had on a dress and some kind of bloomers! My shoes were high-top black boots with buttons! Slowly, I began to realize I was in a different time----a simpler time.

I took the water back to the house and called 'Pa' and the boys for dinner. What a dinner! Chicken, potatoes and carrots! It sure beats peanut butter and jelly. Everyone was very pleasant. They spoke mostly of the work left to do that day. Pa was going to finish up the fence mending, Samuel and Seth were going to clean out the horse barn, and Ma and I were to do the laundry. I thought we definitely got the better job.

Boy, was I wrong! First we carried a basket of clothes, an old scrub board and some smelly type of soap down to the creek. We took turns washing the clothes. Actually, to me it seemed more like beating the clothes. I was thankful there was only one basketful! One good thing about the chore was that it gave Ma and me chance to talk. I found all kinds of interesting facts about my 'family'.

It seems we all came here with Pa's parents about seven years ago. I found out Grandpa died that first year. He got real sick after he had cut himself with an old axe. Then Grandma died just last year. She had an abscessed tooth and the poison apparently went to her heart. It sure made me appreciate the doctors from home---wherever that was. I learned that the simple life I had always dreamed about was more difficult than it was romantic. The frontier novels I had read now seemed misleading.

After a couple of hours of scrubbing, we went back to the house and hung the clothes to dry. Then Ma said it was time to get started on supper. It seemed to me that we had just finished cleaning up from dinner. I loaded the stove with wood while Ma put all the left over chicken and vegetables in a pan of water. Later, she put some bread in the oven, and the house smelled wonderful.

At about dusk, the guys came in for supper. We had a simple meal of soup and bread. After supper, we sat out on the porch and Pa read the Bible to us. He also read some poems by a man named Milton, who I thought sounded alot like the Bible. Then it was time for bed. It seemed rather early to go to sleep, but I actually had no trouble at all. I was so tired!

The days and weeks went on like this. We all worked hard everyday, except Sunday. We rode in a horse drawn wagon for an hour to get to church. That was the only time I saw other people. I grew to love and respect my family and the hard life they lived. So many times I wished I could give Pa the large green tractor I had left behind. It would have saved him so much time and pain. And if only Ma could have a real washing machine. That would have saved my back, too. But we didn't have those things, and it just made the work seem harder when I thought about it. I tried to concentrate on my work and to make the best of my new 'simple' life.

Several weeks later, Ma told me the apples were ready for me to go to the orchard and pick as many as I could. She sent several baskets with me, and Samuel and Pa were suppose to come help me carry them back to the house at dinner time. The orchard was wonderful. The aroma affected me as it had before. I bent and reached for a long while. I had filled three baskets when I decided to take a break. I was lying in the ground with my hands under my head. My thoughts turned back to my old life. I didn't think it possible but I was really missing everyone and everything. I figured Mom was probably helping Dad in the fields. Samuel was probably helping too. Boy, I missed them. Then I turned my head toward the sun. I jumped up to my feet!

The grain bins! The beautiful tool shed! The wonderful combine--complete with corn head! "Dad! Dad!" I shouted as I ran toward the combine. "Dad where are you?!" A man, my Dad, stepped from behind a huge tire and said, "Well, here I am sugar. What's wrong? Is it time for dinner already?" I hugged him hard and told him I loved him and that I loved this farm and the life we have. I told him alot of things as we walked through the orchard toward our lovely, brick, ranch home with the wonderfully tall television antennae and the microwave and the washer and the dryer and the air conditioner and the....

61.

A Texan Tale

Ted Thompson

Twenty Pentecostals
Naked as can be
(boom, boom, boom)
Squished into a Pontiac
Damning MTV
(boom, boom, boom)

They had to buy American
Cause no car by Japanese
(boom, boom, boom)
Could haul around their assets
Without their BVDs
(boom, boom, boom)

From all that biology
They've figured what it means
(boom, boom, boom)
The origin of all their sins
Is hidden in their jeans.
(boom, boom, boom)

Such knowledge they have eaten
Like an apple from a tree,
(boom, boom, boom)
But unlike Eve, they've shed their leaves
Snake's clothes must never be.
(boom, boom, boom)

8 Section 1 The Herald-News

The devil made them do it, car nudes say

VINTON, La. (AP) — The devil made them do it. That's what some of the 20 naked Pentecostals packed cheek-to-cheek into a car told police after the vehicle crashed into a tree.

Officers watched in disbelief as the group piled out of the 1990 Pontiac Grand Am after the wreck.

The passengers, relatives from Floydada, Texas, said they were en route to a religious retreat somewhere in Florida, Police Chief Dennis Drouillard said Thursday.

He said some passengers said they stripped because their clothes were possessed by the devil.

"Didn't have a stitch of clothes on. I mean, no socks, no underwear, no nothin'," he said. "They didn't say much. They mainly got out and chanted religious sayings."

The car was totaled, but the injuries all were minor, Drouillard said.

"I guess when you're packed in that tight, there's not much room to move around," he said.

Floydada is a Texas Panhandle town about 550 miles from Vinton.

62.

Ol' Tucker Young

Matthew Page

This is the story of Ol' Tucker Young,
Who's legend lived ago, so very long.
He made baseball what it is today--
All the way back in 1858.
Legend has it they won three and lost none--
Good for the first world series and number one.
It took this team to the bottom of nine,
When Ol' Tucker Young grabbed himself some pine.
The Pennsylvania Woodchucks--best in the trade--
Against the Harrisburgh Stars, where Tucker played.
The Woodchucks were cocky, and thought it was won--
But there were nine innings left before it was done.
The Woodchucks led off with a great beginning--
A three run homer capped a four run inning.
The Stars came to hit, but let down their town--
Three pitches from Lefty--three up and three down.
The next inning led to only more trouble--
A single, two walks, and then a double.
When it finally done, the Stars near death--
Only the second, yet it seemed their last breath.
To the bottom of two--Tucker to bat--
Three pitches from Lefty and the bench he sat.
Two more quick outs--another three up and three down-
Mr. Quickdraw Malone now back to the mound.
Here came a twist--plain and simply strange--
Quickdraw reared back and got them for a change!
So bottom of the third--something went right--
We stroked four nice hits and the Stars shown bright.
But we were still down--now seven to two--
Now the top of the fourth--Malone still threw.
Nothing much happened for them (a two out hit),
The next man whiffed and that was about it.
Bottom of the fourth, Tucker leading it off;
He hit a screaming shot and he was off!
He came into third, adding a ripple--
Leadoff man on with a stand up triple.
He would come in with two others to score--
The score: seven-five at the end of four.
The Chucks now shaky, and a little nervous,
'Till a base-clearing hit that really hurt us.
Bottom of five is a shame to this day--
Two on and no out turned to a triple play.
At the end of five crazy-filled innings,
Not much to cheer for--the fans were all sitting.
Both sides were retired--one, two, three--
At the end of six it looked quite scary.
Top of the seventh went by smoothly.
We then scored two with the bats swinging cruelly.
The top of the eighth, though, wasn't so brief;
So we took out Quickdraw and brought in relief.
He struggled a little, and gave up a run--
Cobb finished the inning, but his day was done.
Cobbs' pinch hitter worked and worked on the count-
But he and two others were soon put out.
Here we were in the ninth--this was the end--
But we had left no pitchers to bring in!
So we called in Tuck--the outfield master--
But when he was through it was sheer disaster. Three runs came in, now fourteen to seven--
To win it would take a gift from heaven.
The Chucks again cocky, and began to brag-- Boasted of how it was in the bag.
Our first man single--two walks got 'em loaded--
He walked in a run and the cheering exploded.
Two singles followed--bases still jammed--
Another man walked--our stands still crammed. Then it got scary--the next two struck out--
Leaving Tucker to hit--and pull us out.
14-11, the bottom of nine--
Bases loaded, two out--Tuck grabbed his pine.
Lefty looked at Tuck, and a grin crossed his face--
Tucker stepped in with the bat he braced.
A check of sign, Lefty got ready to throw--
Tucker held back--it was a little bit low.
But the next pitch he aimed right down the plate--
Poor Tucker missed it--he swung way too late.
Count one and one before the next pitch would fly-- It went soaring up and was ball two--high.
Only imagine what the next pitch was like--
A blazing fastball that went for a strike.
Two-Two the count as he looked for the sign--
Ball three was called--just a little inside.
Now the pitch, three balls and two strikes on Tuck--
The champions to be the Stars or the Chucks.
And Ol' Mother Tucker, cheering her boy on,
Was about to witness a phenomenon.
Lefty's pitch blazed in, and Tucker's bat swung--
He crushed the ball deep--but he stood there stunned!
He was froze in the box--he just watched it sail--
More and more the Chucks' outfielder trailed.
When he came to, realized what he'd done,
He dropped the bat and he started to run.
Tucker at second when the ball was picked up--
Tucker 'round third when the throw hit the cut!
Tuck waved on! The play at the plate----
The dirt kicked with his slide made us wait.
When the dust cleared, the decision came in----
"Tucker is SAFE at the plate! THE STARS WIN!!!"
15-14 cause of Tucker's grand slam;
The Stars earned the right to be called champions!
That's how it started--in 1858
"Ol' Tucker Young--the game's old all-time great.

63.

Splitting

Bill Yarrow

Prophase

We are like sailboats
and run alone. We tie
our summers to the sea
and lean in nets drawn
from each other, dreaming
of mirrors.

Interphase

You have collected
your reflections and I
have tallied my seas. Two
sails of one boat, we
balance on a wave.
Weightless we advance
on separate oceans.

Metaphase
Lines on the sea, just
as the maps told me. We
draw others and designs.

Telephase

Sliced waves like tomatoes.
Some fluid is gone. We love
our wounds and let the excess
ocean. We bleed between each
other, a clean, silent space.

Anaphase

I see above the water
in the wet reflection your
sail is caught in a glass
piece of sky. The mirror
begins to be made of you.
What's left of me is hinged
to the sea.

64.

Eraser

Scott Erickson

It mocks me
Like an ancient enemy it waits
Grinning the way blades do
Praying for me to err
Bloated, misshapen and hideous
Bruise-colored eager saturated
Derilect of words
It plays at innocence.
Pink like a child
Harmless
But I know
It's mocking me now
Lost hope waiting
A patient serpent content with its reason
Ready to strike at the first hint
Of a misstep

65.

Bottomland

Chris Savini

The air hangs thick and moist today,
A low cloud
Opaque, animated, and
So seemingly solid,
Yet I pass through it with ease,
Like waste through the colon of a god.
I tie back my hair but I'm still blind
In this fog.
I strip and shed all things worldly,
I'm still weighted down
In the slough.
And under the low, white, thickening sky,
I sweat and sink
Beneath the surface, into liquid pitch.
Water seeps through my skin,
Humid grief fills my body
Expelling the air from my lungs,
Until I am deflated and lifeless.
Just another water-thing
Feeding the fish.

66.

Clay Hearts

Irma Kump

Bricks are important in my life.
Not mortared bricks stuck to a wall,
But bricks easily acessible
Used as doorstops, or just resting on a shelf in the garage.

I like bricks near me so I can hold one
Now and then and remember
Their warm comfort
Through the savage mountain winters of my childhood.

Back then, the bricks nestled
In our fireplace during the day,
But at day's end, when our precious fire died,
The hot bricks were wrapped in wool cloths and brought to bed.

The heat from the clay hearts
Pulsated well into the night,
Keeping us warm and safe
Under our home-spun woolens in our frigid stone rooms.

67.

Midnight Shift

Dawn Benoit

It is three AM.
My internal clock slumbers
Sleep eludes me
Like a hen kept in production
by artificial light
My senses distorted.

68.

Morning Is A Hard Birth

Bill Yarrow

morning is a hard birth
salmon strike the eye
the sun spreads two bloody legs
the dream fetus cries

in the early bleakness
the eyeblood tilts its white
dark arguments ensue
in the accident of light
in paraphrase of shadow
a fist of glint limps by
glistening syllables
tax the syntax of the sky

69.

Upon Reading Dinosaur James

Art Walters

There once was a boy
By the name of Scott;
He was someone quite special,
And I like him a lot.
Then on through the years,
He grew to a man,
Just, I suppose, as every boy can.
He went on to college;
(I was sure that he would.)
For all gifted and capable
Young people should.
He has a wee daughter
And a lively young son.
As it was once with Scott
Their life's only begun.
And now, "my boy" Scott
I've but one thing to say:
Don't ever grow up,
At least all of the way.

Art Walters taught English at JJC for many years. Scott Taylor is now teaching English at JJC. Art remembers Scott as a little boy and knows him now as an adult. Scott wrote Dinosaur James.

70.

Is Real

Judy Bond

I've been reminded
time and again
the ivory tower
I inhabit
isn't real
but up here
away from
cement
blue collars
street music
jack hammers
garbage trucks
I feel pain
and it seems to be real.

Perhaps confusion
is a luxury
endowed by
distance
from sewers
factories
filth.
Perhaps
the pain down there
is also suffered
at removes
from real

or perceived removes.

74.

From Janet to Heaven

Mike Ahlberg

My chair stands the test of time-
slouching here writing of Janet,
in my view across the room,
structured sentences,
long, sloping syllables-
WHAT A LIAR I AM!
I'm actually here notebook wise,
soaking in bathtub water up to my ears,
hardly able to keep these words afloat-
to keep my eyes open when thinking of her-
oh Heavenly sorrowful blue eyes,
that I should write their thoughts!
Blooming through America and
all the way up to me,
all the way up to heaven

72.

phone call to hyde park, five months too late

sarah elizabeth kremsner

would i have known
(could i have known)
that a simple phone call
a mere hi havent talked in a while and i know its strange
but im glad you did would have such an affect on my mental
well being
on the state of bodily activities which allows me to soar
around the house dancing and singing in such ignorant
childlike joy and ideas twirling in my head, as they have
been doing for so long but different thoughts
thoughts of the future versus the sad sad past
of what we could do with each other as opposed to what
weve done
and peaceful visions
of one more evening walk with you, our bodies draped in
laughter, in sunset patches of fall gold.

9/14/93

And how foolish of me to believe that a call
out of nowhere
would just erase all that has happened
all the missed glances and all the ignored smiles every
intended apology for the lost companionship which we once
shared, once rolled in like children in leaves like lovers in
leaves
like dogs in shit

know that my intentions were of the best kind, of the
purest, most naive kind
and i would have loved to have loved you
to have been allowed long enough to know you
and my feelings softly sway in the darkening distance, too
tired to be hard

9/17/93

72.

Last Summer's Love

John Stobart

I would soon croon a tune in June
My zippity's do-dah babies
My verse'd reverse the hearse (rehearse?)
That was moaning and groaning from scabies.

This month of May it may be maybe
We'd nippit in the bud
This constipation in my heart
A logjam of misery and mud.

I lust for licorice's sweet summer song
That strings from winter's sludgy snout
And wings heart-felt harmonies thru sunsets
That tells what lives is all about.

I search hi; I search low
I look deep; I look shallow
Mine eyes art wide like ocean
Mine hart darts and roasts like marshmallow

For love's fudge may Banana Foster in time
If the coronary's peg cain't pluck out a lime
And don't make a silly Sunday sundae afraid of rime
Or frame the photographs to make life like sublime

73.

Film at Eleven

Ted Thompson

Oh come look into the street,
The clop clop clop of running feet. Grown-ups
and children, oh so sweet, They all come running
down the street.

The dogs and cats they follow along, And all at
once it becomes a throng. They may burst out into
a song.
I think that I will tag along.

We continue down the avenue.
From opening doors more out flew;
The crowd it just grew and grew and grew
Until it filled the avenue.

Turning the corner we did flow
Into a crowd from the street below,
Then buses arrived from Kokomo,
And the swelling mob did ebb and flow.

On we ran into the dark;
The cats did mew, the dogs did bark,
A nudist ran there in the stark
(Thank goodness it was very dark.)

What is this all this?" out loud I think,
I'm thirsty for a cooling drink
From out my friendly kitchen sink;
They won't miss me I hardly think."

So off I broke and headed home
And vowed from thence never more to roam, But
that's a subject for another poem
I thought while trudging toward my home.

I flopped into my favorite chair
And propped my feet into the air,
Thinking it was hardly fair
That I didn't know why I left my chair.

I sat there staring at my shoes
Sinking into the low-down blues,
Then I perked , like all Gentiles and Jews,
It'll all be on the eleven o'clock news.

(These two poems are entries to the Julia A. Moore Contest for Bad Poetry. For submission information see Ted Thompson, C 1066.)

74.

Umbrella

janine passehl

shelter me from
natures onslaught
pouring
upon me
standing
staring
unseeingly at the one who
abandoned me
to the rain
unprotected

75.

Dogged Days

Judy Bond

We do not shun
reminders of mortality;
instead, like dogs
we sniff
and sniff again.
I, too, have sampled the smell--
just another voyeur
trying to figure
what it's like to die
without having to *do* it;
knowing death's thick odor
traces circles on the back of my neck
where it teases tomorrows
from my future
without regard for curiosity,
mine or the next guy's.
I am marked
as surely as Hester Prynne;
yet the shock of knowing
does not bring hysteria
as I imagine it should.
Instead, a series of interruptions
stays my concentration
delays the confrontation I
intend not to acknowledge.
This series is called
living.

76.

AGENBITE

Bill Yarrow

Wasps hover above my head.
I itch.
The wind blows across my chest
forceful not cold
Turpin Hero begins in the first
person and ends in the third.
Joyce's Portrait begins
in the third and ends
in the first. So does Ulysses.
So do we all.
I watch the wasps ignore me.

77.

Corporate America

janine passehl

compulsions
lead to
    perversity and
    greed
infinitely alluring in
    promise and
    splendor
breeding duplicities of
mortal man
until one day
    squandored

a rich man
    no more

78.

?

Janine Passehl

cauldrons gurgle
like your laugh
meshing together
fabricated concoctions of
twisted truths and
fantastic dreams
visionary schemes
that bubble and boil
flowing into reality -
yours alone

79.

For Debi

David Weese

A gentle voice
beckons me waken
A soft manner
breathes life
Into me
Into this dreary day
Does she know
And how do I tell her?
She is my purpose
My reason why

Satin caresses
Silky, bedded kisses
Lacy surrender
And I am complete
Does she know?
And how do I tell her?
Only her completeness
Truly calms my fears

Come
take my hand
We will wander down the years
Be my reason
in this madness

Be my purpose...

All else has faded
There is only you

80.

Footprint In The Sand

Matthew Page

With every passing second
I dream of new land--
But it only seems
It's just footprints in the sand.

I walk the beach
And I see my path--
But a wave comes by
With a violent crash.

And the sand is smooth--
The path lies clean again.

So I retrace my steps
I n hopes of leaving a trace--
But a wave sweeps the shore
With an evil haste.

And the path is smooth--
The path lies clean again.

With every passing wave
I'm only left where I stand--
And it always seems
it's just footprints in the sand.

I don't release my dream,
And I walk on again--
Not giving up hope
While I still walk the sand.

But the sand is smooth--
The path is free of prowl.

So I gaze at the ocean,
And I see it's meant to be--
And I look where I've been
And I'm swept into the sea.

And the sand is smooth--
There is no path to follow.

With every crashing wave
I see where I stand--
And I finally come to see
I'm just a footprint in the sand.

81.

GYPSY

janine passehl

graceful and
colorfully layered in
scarves whose
fluidity
wraps her in scents the
smoothness of silk
rich in flavor
her charcoal eyes
reflect in crystal
buying your future and
selling you love

83.

NYMPH

Mike Ahlberg

I'm constantly reminded of her thousands of adolescent thoughts, pre-pubescent, like changings and cravings of lustfulness-all intermingling with my own stolid imaginings, collectively crushing us together. So alike we are even, that we don't tear each other apart, gnashing bones in between white, joyous teeth, happy to be parts of us, so gracefully close during lapsing periods, kisses; showersful, small kisses, large ones long, deep and happy.

Her lasting affections have astounded me thus far: hanging onto me through all this last year of knowing her and loving her; going through my every period of time with me, gloating over me at huge parties with her seemingly millions of friends, caressing me in every public opening.

But no, it's not all one-sided affections, as I am constantly and desperately fawning over her always, this beautiful girl of my past lives dreams possibly- her poor family could never give her as much love as me, as I have? All I think about at work in my clerk position at the bank is her beauty and face careening down towards me, rifling kisses miles in my direction- my Jasmine, oh, sweet Jasmine in these arms! My eyes following her up, leaving the long entrails of this ooze, love, our love all over her body and just now entering mine.

She's finally moved into my apartment with me, my goading and cajoling all along turning her head more, 360 degree turn around to throw herself into my arms. Sleeping in my own bed for now prohibited; I'm sleeping on the couch till we're ready she says, ready to love but as yet unwilling- immediately ready to love but as yet unwilling- immediately she's in my bed and sleeping with me watching from the door, shyly- she trusts me this much that she would allow herself to fall asleep with her door (mine) unlocked and open, before I had fallen asleep!

Her rose petal eyelids fluttering with REM as I watch; are they dreams of me? Rosebud breasts hidden under the covers of my sheets, soft, silky thighs, as if waiting for me and warming my side of the bed. The couch is cold from very few sittings as I falter away to my own nightmares and possible dreams, my dreamy Jasmine only in the next room.

84.

SUBCONSCIOUS

janine passehl

swirling waters of
the unknown
churn
kaleidescopic fish
clamber
to the surface
only to
dive
to the depths
once again to
safety and
isolation

85.

A SECOND CHANCE

Donald Schuldt

The bitter cold of a Chicago wind began to bite into Joe and Tim's faces. Although both felt it, neither would admit that they were cold. Like most tourists, Tim and Joe were unprepared for a Chicago January.

"Doesn't this blasted wind ever cease?" Joe muttered to himself. "Who's idea was it anyway to walk from Water Tower Place to the Sears Tower? It would have been easier to take a cab. But Nooo, Tim had to leave most of his money in the room and couldn't afford the fare."

"What was that?" Tim asked. "I couldn't understand what you were muttering about."

"Just talking to myself." Joe replied.

As the two rounded the corner, Tim nearly tripped over an older man sitting against the wall. The strange man was covered in dirt, unshaven, and his long heavy coat was well worn. He looked up into Joe and Tim's faces pleadingly. "Could you guys spare some change for food?" he asked.

Joe returned a menacing look. "Can't afford it," he coldly replied. Tim looked at the stranger, dug into his pocket and pulled out his last five dollars. "Here, it's not much, but it's all I got."

"You're a life saver pal, a life saver!" the stranger said as he got up and started to walk away from the scene. He took the corner and was quickly lost to view in the throng of the crowd.

"Why'd you give him your last five bucks? You know that beggar won't spend it on food. All he'll do is spend it on liquor or something else to get drunk on."

"I don't know. Just had a good feeling about it," Tim said quietly. "Well, don't expect me to pay your way through the Sears building. I'll leave you out on the street to freeze. I didn't come all the way to Chicago to miss the world's tallest skyscraper."

"Go ahead, I'll be fine."

* * * * *

Twelve years after the Chicago trip, Tim's life has been completely turned around. It was the basic Rags-to-Riches story. In short, Tim had lost everything. His home, his car, his job, and his wife.

He could only ponder the mistakes he made and wish he had a second chance. The affair with his secretary quickly ended his marriage. Whereas the hunch he had to purchase extra stock for his company went bad, eventually leading to the loss of his job. With his marriage went his house, and with his job he lost the car.

At the time his choices seemed right. If he only had spent some time to think them out.

Tim now spent most of his time on the streets of Atlanta trying to collect money for his next alcoholic purchase. "Ah, the only thing that never failed him," he thought. Tim reached behind the trash can he was sitting next to, and emerged with a bottle of Jack Daniel's. He popped the top and took down the last mouthful of the tart liquid. "I'll have to get some more of this stuff," he thought, as he tossed the bottle across the alley in which he sat.

Tim reached into his pocket only to find it empty. "Looks like it's time for some charity work," he spoke to no one in particular. Tim stood up and began to slowly limp towards the main street.

Atlanta's winters weren't so harsh, but they did take their toll on Tim. Tim could hardly make it across the alley, let alone all the way out to the street. He eventually made it, stopping every few feet or so to catch his breath. Once on the street, TIm headed to the nearest intersection. He no longer heeded the words of onlookers as they passed by, he just blocked them out.

Tim eventually limped his way to the corner and fell against the building's wall for support. He then fell to a sitting position, and, after catching his breath, took off his hat and put it next to him. "Spare some change?" he spoke to anyone passing by.

From a distance, his dirty appearance, ragged hair, and torn clothes gave him the appearance of a normal bum. People in general would avoid him. If the onlookers did toss him coins, it was usually a quarter or less.

At that rate, it took Tim about a week to save up for the more expensive brands.

* * * * *

Tim wasn't having much luck today. His hat was still empty, and he was seriously thinking about hobbling back to his garbage can. Tim had sat there for the entire afternoon and no one gave him a

donation. "I'll give it a few more minutes," he thought to himself, "just a few more minutes."

Just ten two well dressed men rounded the corner and one nearly tripped over Tim.

"Hey, watch where you're sitting, you bum!" the one with the fat tie rudely said.

Tim put on his best sorry-puppy dog face. "Spare some change?" he asked.

"It'd go to waste," the one with the fat tie spoke again as he stepped back. "C'mon Dave, let's get out of here," he gestured towards his partner.

The one apparently named Dave gave Tim a woeful look. "Here, I know it's not much, but it's the only thing I got," Dave said as he pulled out a crisp five-dollar bill from his pocket.

"Thank you! Thank you so much. I'll put it to good use, I promise."

"Dave, that was stupid!" the one with the fat tie spoke. "Now how do you expect to buy dinner? That was your last five bucks."

"I know," Dave replied. "I just think that somehow I'm returning the favor."

"What favor?"

"When I was younger, I was down of my luck. I actually took up begging on the street for money. Well, I'd spend most of it on liquor and was barely surviving. Then some guy gave me his last five dollars, which, I admit, I was planning to spend on alcohol. I ran all the way to the Liquor Store with that sweet taste in my mind. There was a restaurant next door, and somehow the smell of food overpowered my urge for alcohol. The manager wasn't too happy when I walked in, yet I convinced him that I needed a meal. All of the prices were above five dollars, so I asked him if I could earn a meal. He agreed, and I got my first job as a dishwasher. That five dollars that the stranger gave me sent me on the road to recovery. And somehow I think that my money may help this guy out. I'm simply returning the favor."

Tim looked up at Dave. He knew that somehow, the five dollars that he gave to the beggar in Chicago came in full circle. He had planned to buy alcohol with the money, but now he knew exactly what to do with it. "You guys wouldn't know of a restaurant needing a dishwasher?" he asked.

"Sorry, no can do in that department," Dave replied as he started to walk away.

"Hey, wait!" Tim cried. "What city did you say that you were a beggar in?"

"It was in the middle of January, in Chicago."

86.

IMMUNITY

Bill Yarrow

given immunity from community pain
he learns to abstain, dresses warmly in
belief. moonlight wears his sheath.

he has long given up eyes. ears
have fled. he speaks in ghosts
yet is devout: happy, abandoned, without.

nothing stands in his path. he learns
his mask. he makes his way through
things. he enters us unnoticing.

87.

JOLIET

Which of the following is by a famous poet? Answer in the next issue!

JOLIET

On the one hand the steel works.
On the other hand the penitentiary.
Santa Fe trains and Alton trains
Between smokestacks on the west
And gray walls on the east.
And Lockport down the river.

Part of the valley is God's.
And part is man's.
The river course laid out
A thousand years ago.
The canals ten years back.

The sun on two canals and one river
Makes three stripes of silver
Or copper and gold
Or shattered sunflower leaves.
    Talons of an iceburg
    Scraped out this valley.
    Claws of an avalanche loosed here.

JOLIET

Joliet, small endeavoring city
struggling to be great,
Erect your houses where old ones fall
Rebuild, recast, reconstruct, recreate
But retain the heritage from which
you assert your name.

Enlarge your boundaries.
Increase the land from which you will
mold your citizens.
    Educate,
    Demonstrate,
Produce a population proud to be part
of a small endeavoring city
struggling to be great.

JOLIET

Joliet--All American City
Divided by a canal
Recipient of Chicago's sewage
Decrepit bridges span the muck
East side against the West

Joliet has everything:
    Three bars and a gas station
    Adorn each corner
    Blocks divided by flop houses
    Ugly brown courthouse
    Politicians fight for each choice
    tidbit of payola and graft
Joliet
    City of Institutions
    The prison 5000 strong
    Reformatories and hospitals
    A cathedral for a measure of good

    In the East
    The ever moving railroads
    Termites ever moving

    In the West
    Subdivisions ever sprawling
    Cancer ever destroying the farms

    In the South
    FAI Eighty
    Five hundred homes for a
    High level bridge.

    In the North
    The prison and gravel pits
    Gaping, open sores on the land
    Oozing filth of the canal

O Joliet/The All American City

88.

Gentleman with the Smile

Patricia Burke

Sir, in what school of discipline
was your face enrolled?
Control of that nature is
not born in a man but is learned.
Where did you and
was the fee outragious?

Surely, there is too much knowledge
and too much depth behind that face
for one to believe that all your ponderings
are of such a pleasant flavor.
Do you smile in your sleep?
Would anyone know if you did?

I do believe if you had shared your bed
with Venus and had, this very morning,
left her side
you would not posess such an expression.
So again I ask the Alma Mater
and may I have a reference?

89.

Remedy

Ted Thompson

Last night at ten
The practiced smiles
Anchored video poultices
To injured souls needing their fix
Of the death and disaster drug.
This morning,
With a bang,
The latest dose hit the porch.
An elixir of ethnic hate In the Balkans.
A potion of passion gone wild
In the suburbs.
A capsule of craven savagery
In the cities.
A pill of pistols popping death
In every supposedly placid place.
The journalistic nostrum
For the modern plague of momentary sanity.
A week of such regimen -
A sure cure.

90.

God, God

Nancy Lockhart

God, God, do you sit somewhere
In a rocking chair to crochet my destiny?
Have you got big eyes?
Are your ears parabolic?
Can you hear the frolic, the squalor,
From your parlor in the sky?

God, God, I bet you're the nick-of-time
Woodcutter who'll save me from the cross...
And cranky.
Or are you a hanky-panky wolf in a long white gown,
Out on the town to get me?

God, God, if I'm your spitting image,
You're just a babe in the wood,
A Riding Hood
With a basket of goodies.

91.

And He Swam and He Swam Right Over the Dam

John Stobart

"Write me a poem, Baby."
That line seems to haunt me.
A book by H. Allen Smith, authority,
A taunt I use incessantly.
Write us a poem that we may see
The large and small of insanity.
The swift and sudden truth of me
The bold but gracious thrust of thee.
Write me, baby.
Baby, write me
Write me large for eternity
Etch my lines on the family 's tree.
Raise me goosebumps in a chivaree
Make me laugh and cry religiously.
A poem, baby, write me.
Of me
For me
To me
Through me
Woo me
Do me
Me, baby, write in harmony
Struggle for that euphony
Mind the syntax soothingly
Stretch the senses for no fee
Show the patches on my knee
Avoid puns floating on the sea
And rhymes that suckle-sting a bee
Never be flip or gauche or cutesy
Or idiomatic to a T.
Write me a poem, baby me.

92.

Half-nelson

Nancy Lockhart

Can we hold this moment
You and I
Wrap ourselves around this time like hands
About a brandy glass?

Can we savor the essence of now
Even as it evaporates before our eyes?

My love for you is a dimpled fist
Clinging to yesterday's circus balloon.
My love is the jelly jar house
Of the firefly.
My love is the pig in the piggy bank.
My love is the photographed smile.
My love is the fingers that pinch the butterfly
Wing to wing.
My love is a feline tongue
In a milky sauce.
My love is the hand that reaches
Into the old silk hat---
But what are the magic words?

93.

Today, For the First Time

John Stobart

Today, for the first time
I saw a potato bloom,
Pale blue petals, saffron center,
Forgettable
Yet soon I'll be fifty, A
half-century,
And there's so much around
Me I've failed to see

Had I not been lamenting
My failure to notice the
Wild Rose until now, its pink
Blooms having shriveled,
I'd have missed
The potato again this year.

Some six years the rose grew
Where a Holiday Inn now stands.
Seeing myself as St. Francis of
The Flowers, I dug for seeming
Hours in the August heat to
Save it from the dozer's vicious blade.

Yearly since then I've celebrated myself,
A hero for that moment,
As reward for my many scratches then
And since due to my concern for
This pale unscented bloom.

Today, though, the potato blooms
For me
And maybe for the once-courted, oft-
applauded rose I had forgotten.

94.

Ode to the Ladies on the Midnight Movie

Patricia Burke

Oh, those ladies with their
squared shoulders in their tailored
suits so slim.
They always walked with straight backs
and with purpose.
Voices that did justice
to the language with accents
familiar, but different from now.

They came long before Virginia Slims,
those ladies on the Midnight Movie,
but they were really liberated
more than us because
they could be real with confidence.
When they were hurt, they cried
and they shouted when angry
and they loved when loved
In ways that aren't fashionable now.

Oh, today we're so controlled
and so dishonest with ourselves.
We admit nothing because
we're supposed to be self-sustaining.
When we're hurt, we smile
When we're angry, we laugh
and when we love, we don't
generally admit it.

The last time I was hurt
I handled it like a pro
and told my friends I wasn't losing any sleep
and they nodded in approval
and even took me out to celebrate
with a drink

Then I went home and,
with a blanket and a box of kleenex,
watched the Midnight Movie.

95.

Christmas Rush and Mums

John Stobart

Sour cream 'n chive potatoes
With
Broiled lamb chops
Tripped the menu
Daintily through my mind,
So that my market basket
Went clank
And dumped
My mums out on the asphalt drive:
Oh sunshine mums meant to lift
My wife from her depression!
A grandpa-type
Leaned down to assist,
Flamingo-like pose,
When a screech like sin
Invaded the scene
And a fender curved
Round his bender.
A dark brown boat
Glistening with lustre
Commanded by Betty Crocker Incarnate
Had fish-tailed around my protector,
And now stared at Spring Byington gone
rancid
Who with twisted-mouthed contempt
Shouted, "Old Goat, watch your ass!"
And I responded,
"Curb your mouth, you chauvinist tycoon!"
And the old guy frowned at me,
Offering the flowers and saying,
"That's no tycoon, that's my wife."

• •

96.

Those Groan-down Christman Means

Nancy Lockhart

Santa Claus don't come no more.
He don't bring me pink organdy dolls with
Real hair.
He don't hold me in his lap and
Let me feel his spun glass whiskers.

Christmas means dirty snow Santa Claus lies
And looking at poverty through a View-Master
Parties where silver ladies in push-up bras
French kiss the whole executive department.
Christmas means.
Too much punch and puking on the neighbor's
Red fur toilet seat cover.
Hot feet in vinyl boots in crowded stores
Which send customers to customer convenience
For boxes to hold presents bought on Master Charge
That nobody likes anyway.

Daddy's drunk most of the time.
Mother's dead, so she don't care,
And Santa Claus don't come no more.

• •

97.

A CHRISTMAS PROMISE

David Weese

Cinnamon smiles
And gingerbread kisses
Twinkling light magic
In anticipating little eyes

Gently, mother earth's snowflakes
Bedeck the earth
Her subtle masterpiece
a gift sent to soften hearts -
to remind us

She is peace

Yet there is no peace

Hate abounds
Under winter's simple majesties

Calloused greed thrives
Amid her silent splendor

Her gift, a reminder
Yet a promise of new life
She is unerring faithfulness
In a world torn with strife

Her methods - oft' harsh
And so too our world
Yet her ways are of balance
Strife brings meaning to peace

So sleep little ones
Dream sugar plum dreams
Of jolly old fat men
And sleighs on the roof

You are part of her promise
You have opened my eyes
To peace oft' unnoticed
To the richness of life

98.

Walking The Woods One Winter Afternoon

John Stobart

Who owns the woods I seldom know
Imminent Domain explains them, though
Nobody cares I'm walking here
To watch the woods fill up with snow.

My weary mind does think it queer
I tramp about in mortal fear
Of viscious gangs and frozen lake
The chillest evenings of the year.

I try to give myself a break
And not assume it's my mistake
The crunching echoes of my leap
Through rice-like rain or downy flake.

These woods are solid, stark, and deep
But I reject them as my keep
And lie elsewhere to fall asleep
And lie elsewhere to fall asleep.

WORDEATER 85 STAFF

Dave Beals
Mary Frances Lund
Doug Masters
Chris Savini
Sherry Thien

Advisor, John Stobart

For a selection to be published in this issue, three of the above had to vote for acceptance. For the awards, only John Stobart is responsible. Special Note: This issue contains selections from students, faculty, staff, and alumni of JJC. Only current students, however, are eligible for awards.

AWARDS

Poetry- $5.00 each

Scott Erickson
Sarah Kremsner
Janine Passehl
Chris Savini
David Weese

Prose- $5.00 each

Mike Ahlberg
Scott Erickson
Janine Passehl

Covers (front and back)
$20.00
Michael Fletcher

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Manuscripts and cover designs must be submitted to John Stobart, room C1069, by:
February 11,1994 - Wordeater 87
April 15, 1994 - Wordeater 88
Manuscripts should be typed and will not be returned.

The Wordeater Wizardess wishes to gratefully acknowledge Scott Olsen and the Staff in the E-Computing Lab for their assistance with this issue. Thanks a million!
mfl

MICHAEL
FLETCHER